

## Applying for a New License

Complete all paperwork and submit with the required fees to our office for approval. Only fully completed applications will be processed and must include the following:

- **Proof of adequate workers' compensation insurance as required by law**
- **Certification of liability insurance**
- **Proof of basic training in proper pruning practices as described below:**
- **Affidavit of Training - Class A (PDF)**
- **Change of Status (PDF)**

**Class A License:** a copy of your current certification card from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) or American Society of Consulting Arborists plus a notarized affidavit as described under the Class A Tree Trimmer License section.

**Class B License:** certificate of successful completion of the 4-hour training program provided by Broward County Extension Education (requires a passing grade of at least 70% correct). One trained person per job site is required.

### The County Training Program:

Training is provided by **Broward County Extension Education**. Classes are approximately 4 hours long and are conducted in English, Spanish and Creole at various sites around the county. Tree Trimmer I class is followed by a multiple choice exam. Classes will teach proper pruning practices according to American National Standards Institute A300 guidelines.

For a complete schedule of class meeting dates and locations or to register for a class, contact Broward County Extension Education at 954-370-3725. **Registration and payment of the training fee is required at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled class date!!**

**Renewing your License:** License renewal requires you to complete the necessary paperwork and provide the required documentation (as previously described) and pay all fees. For the Class B Tree Trimmer license, you must provide proof that you have participated in the Tree Trimmer II program since your previous license was granted. To obtain a renewal form, please contact the Broward County Permitting, Licensing and Consumer Protection Division at 954-765-4400 ext. 1411072.

**Enforcement:** Broward County Permitting, Licensing and Consumer Protection Division enforces the Tree Trimmer Licensing Ordinance seven days a week. Enforcement officers look for unlicensed tree trimmers and for tree trimmer crews working without a qualified person physically present on the job site. Any organization or individual operating without the required Class "A" or Class "B" license is subject to a notice of violation, a citation or a "stop work" order.

Violators who receive a citation will have their case heard by a hearing officer. The hearing officer can impose fines up to \$15,000 dollars per day, depending on the severity of the infraction.

- **To report unlicensed Tree Trimmers please contact the Broward County Permitting, Licensing and Consumer Protection Division at 954-765-4400, Option 2.**





# Know the Law!

## Tree Trimmers

- Applying for a New License
- Renewing Your License
- Enforcement

The Broward County Board of County Commissioners has adopted an ordinance under Article 15 of the Broward County Natural Resource Protection Code, titled "Regulation of Tree Trimmers" for regulating the tree trimming industry. This action was taken as a result of concerns about the quality of tree trimming practiced in Broward County, and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

All businesses or governmental agencies that advertise, offer or perform tree trimming in Broward County are required to obtain a Tree Trimmer License. Licenses are valid for a maximum of two years.

### What is the purpose of this ordinance?

Through continuing education, this ordinance intends to reduce the frequency of poor pruning practices such as over lifting, rounding, flush cuts, stub cuts, hat racking and other forms of pruning-related tree abuse. These poor pruning practices damage trees, reduce their aesthetic value and can make them more prone to storm-related failure, creating hazardous situations. Tree abuse is prohibited under Chapter 27 Article 14 of the Broward County Natural Resource Protection Code.



### What types of licenses are issued?

Two classes of licenses are issued, depending upon the level of professional training an organization's staff has achieved:

#### Class A Tree Trimmer License:

Requires a sole proprietor or a qualified individual for a business organization or a governmental agency to possess an International Society of Arboriculture Arborist Certification or be a Registered Consulting Arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists. Also required is an affidavit stating that the required number of employees have either successfully completed a substitute training course or the training course offered by Broward County Extension Education.

#### Class B Tree Trimmer License:

Requires a sole proprietor, a business organization, or a governmental agency to demonstrate that they have the required number of employees who have successfully completed the training course offered by Broward County Extension Education and have passed an examination.



# Helping Trees Survive Storm Season & Beyond

## Pruning

Specific types of pruning may be necessary to maintain a mature tree in a healthy, safe and attractive condition.

### Crown cleaning

is the removal of dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly attached and low-vigor branches from the crown of a tree.

### Crown thinning

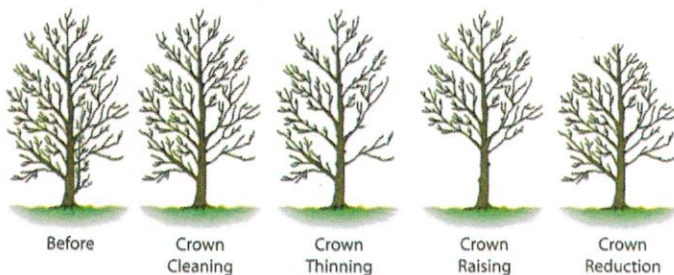
suggested prior to hurricane season is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. Thinning opens the foliage of a tree, reduces weight on heavy limbs, and helps retain the tree's natural shape.

### Crown raising

removes the lower branches from a tree in order to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, pedestrians and vistas.

### Crown reduction

reduces the size of a tree, often for clearance for utility lines. Reducing the height or spread of a tree is best accomplished by pruning back the leaders and branch terminals to lateral branches that are large enough to assume the terminal roles (at least one-third the diameter of the cut stem). Compared to topping, this helps maintain the form and structural integrity of the tree.



**Big tree - big trouble:** This nice rounded canopy hides the fact that the huge limb on the lower right is poorly attached and could fall at any time

## Hiring an Arborist

Pruning large trees can be dangerous. If pruning involves working above the ground, or using power equipment, it is best to hire a professional arborist. An arborist can determine what type of pruning is necessary to improve the health, appearance and safety of your trees. A professional arborist can provide the services of a trained crew, with all of the required safety equipment and liability insurance.

## DO NOT "Hat Rack" Trees, often called "Topping"

### What is topping?

Topping is the indiscriminate cutting back of tree branches to stubs or lateral branches that are not large enough to assume the terminal role. Other names for topping include "heading," "tipping," "hat-racking," and "rounding over." The most common reason given for topping is to reduce the size of a tree. Often homeowners feel that their trees have become too large for their property. People fear that tall trees may pose a hazard. Topping, however, is not a viable method of height reduction, and certainly does not reduce the hazard. **In fact, topping will make a tree more hazardous in the long term.**

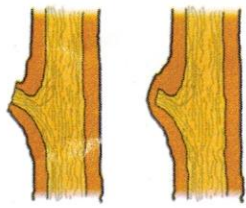
Topping is cutting branches back to stubs, or lateral branches.



### Topping Stresses Trees

Topping often removes 50-100% of the leaf-bearing crown of a tree. Since the leaves are the "food factories" of a tree, this can temporarily "starve" a tree. The severity of the pruning triggers a sort of survival mechanism. The tree activates latent buds, forcing the rapid growth of multiple shoots below each cut. The tree needs to put out a new crop of leaves as soon as possible. If a tree does not have the stored energy reserves to do this, it will be seriously weakened and may die.



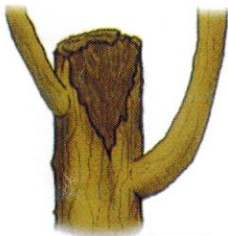


Begin a cut at the edge of the branch collar  
The collar is left intact after a proper cut

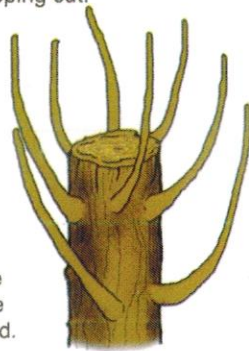


A stressed tree is more vulnerable to insect and disease infestations. Large, open pruning wounds expose the sapwood and heartwood to attack. The tree may lack sufficient energy to chemically “defend” the wounds against invasion. Some insects are actually attracted to stressed trees by chemical signals.

New shoots develop profusely below a topping cut.



Stubs left from topping usually decay. The shoots that are produced below the cut are weakly attached, and often become a hazard.



## Topping Causes Decay



The preferred location to make a pruning cut is just beyond the branch collar at the branch’s point of attachment. The tree is biologically equipped to close such a wound provided the tree is healthy enough and the wound

is not too large. Cuts made along a limb, between lateral branches, create stubs with wounds that the tree may not be able to close. The exposed wood tissues begin to decay. Normally a tree will “wall off” or compartmentalize the decaying tissues. But few trees can defend the multiple severe wounds caused by topping. The decay organisms are given a free path to move down through the branches.



Branches within a tree’s crown produce thousands of leaves to absorb sunlight. When the leaves are removed, the remaining branches and trunk are suddenly exposed to high levels of light and heat. The result may be sunburn of the tissues beneath the bark. This can lead to cankers, bark splitting and death of some branches.

## Topping Creates Hazards \*\*

The survival mechanism that causes a tree to produce multiple shoots below each topping cut comes at great expense to the tree. These shoots develop from buds near the surface of the old branches. Unlike normal branches that develop in a “socket” of overlapping wood tissues, these new shoots are only anchored in the outermost layers of the parent branches.

The new shoots grow very quickly, as much as 20 feet in one year, in some species. Unfortunately, the shoots are very prone to breaking, especially during windy conditions. The irony is that while the goal was to reduce the tree’s height to make it safer, it has been made more hazardous than before.

*Many trees in the Weston rights-of-way were still viable after the storm but still needed to be removed by city crews as the hurricane damage and subsequent removal of broken branches, resulted in topping. These trees, while recovering, would become a hazard if allowed to remain.*

## Topping Makes Trees Ugly

The natural branching structure of a tree is a biological wonder. Trees form a variety of shapes and growth habits, all with the same goal of presenting their leaves to the sun. Topping removes the ends of the branches, often leaving ugly stubs. Topping destroys the natural form of a tree.

Without the leaves a topped tree appears disfigured and mutilated. With the leaves, it is a dense ball of foliage, lacking its simple grace. A tree that has been topped can never fully regain its natural form.

## Topping is Expensive

The cost of topping a tree is not limited to what the perpetrator is paid. If the tree survives, it will require pruning again within a few years. It will either need to be reduced again, or storm damage will have to be cleaned up.





If the tree dies it will have to be removed. Topping is a high maintenance pruning practice. There are some hidden costs of topping. One is the

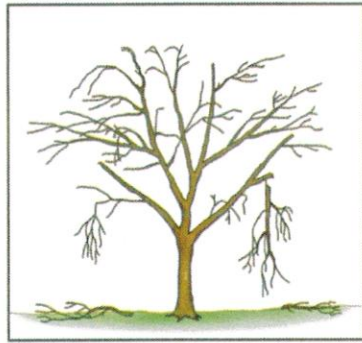
reduction in property value. Healthy, well maintained trees can add 10-20% to the value of a property. Disfigured, topped trees are considered an impending expense.

Another potential cost of topped trees is the potential liability. Topped trees are prone to breaking and can be hazardous. Since topping is considered to be an unacceptable pruning practice, any damage caused by branch failure of a topped tree may lead to a finding of negligence in a court of law.

### Tree First Aid After a Storm

Remove hanging and broken limbs first

Reduce broken branches back to a living lateral branch that is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  the size of the broken branch if possible



In the aftermath of a major storm, the initial impulse of property owners is generally along the lines of "let's get this mess cleaned up." But hasty decisions can often result in removing trees that could have been saved.

Doing the right things after trees have been damaged can make the difference between giving your trees a good chance of survival and losing them unnecessarily. The National Arbor Day Foundation urges home and property owners to follow a few simple rules in administering tree first aid after a storm:

1. Don't try to do it all yourself. If large limbs are broken or hanging, or if high climbing or overhead chainsaw work is needed, it's a job for a professional arborist. They have the necessary equipment and knowledge needed, and are generally listed in the telephone directory under "Tree Service."

2. Take safety precautions. Look up and look down

dangerous hanging branches that look like they're ready to fall. Stay away from any downed utility lines, low-voltage telephone, or cable lines and even fence wires can become electrically charged when there are fallen or broken electrical lines nearby. Don't get under broken limbs that are hanging or caught in other branches overhead. And, unless you really know how to use one, leave chainsaw work to the professionals.

3. Remove any broken branches still attached to the tree. Removing the jagged remains of smaller sized broken limbs is one common repair that property owners can make after a storm. If done properly, it will minimize the risk of decay agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches that are broken should be cut back to the trunk or a main limb by an arborist. For smaller branches, follow the pruning guidelines provided so that you make clean cuts in the right places, helping the tree to recover faster.

4. Repair torn bark. To improve the tree's appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth the ragged edges of wounds where bark has been torn away. Try not to expose any more of the cambium (greenish inner bark) than is necessary, as these fragile layers contain the tree's food and water lifelines between roots and leaves.

5. Resist the urge to overprune. Don't worry if the tree's appearance isn't perfect. With branches gone, your trees may look unbalanced or naked. You'll be surprised at how fast they will heal, grow new foliage, and return to their natural beauty.

6. Don't top your trees. While storm damage may not always allow for ideal pruning cuts, "topping," cutting main branches back to stubs, is one of the worst things you can do for your trees. Stubs will tend to grow back a lot of weakly-attached branches that are even more likely to break when a storm strikes. Also, the tree will need all its resources to recover from the stress of storm damage. Topping the tree will reduce the amount of foliage, on which the tree depends for the food and nourishment needed for re-growth.

Much of the information for this article was garnered from International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), a non-profit organization supporting tree care research around the world and dedicated to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees.



**Prune for strength by removing:**

- Co-dominant leaders or multiple trunks to encourage the growth of one main trunk
- Injured, diseased and dead branches.
- Rubbing branches

**Prune for form by removing:**

- Excess lateral branches to produce a ladder effect at maturity
- Water sprouts and root suckers
- Limbs that turn inward, cross or extend

Broward County has adopted regulations that prohibit improper pruning. These regulations were adopted due to health, safety and aesthetic concerns associated with improper pruning.



**Broward County  
Department of Planning & Environmental Protection**

**Biological Resources Division  
218 S.W. First Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
519-1230**



**Broward County  
Board of County Commissioners**

This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$960.00, or \$.192 per copy to inform the public about proper tree pruning.

If you require auxiliary aids for communication, please call our office at (954) 519-1230 (voice) or (954) 357-6158 (TTY).

This public document can be made available in large print, tape cassette or Braille, by request. An equal opportunity employer and provider of services.



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# PROPER TREE PRUNING



## Proper Tree Pruning

Pruning of tree limbs on a regularly scheduled basis will improve tree health, control growth, and enhance fruiting, flowering, and appearance.

Trees should be pruned for the first time 2 to 5 years after planting, then every 5 to 7 years thereafter. Pruning is best done from winter to early spring (before new growth starts) because wounds close quickly as growth starts in the spring and insect and disease infestations are less likely.

Step back and look at the tree to be pruned. Try to imagine what it will look like when it is going to be larger, and remember that tree limbs will increase in diameter and lengthen but will not move upward on the trunk as the tree grows.

### Proper pruning cuts

In order to make a proper pruning cut, you must first locate the branch collar.

The branch collar is an extension of the main stem of the tree where the branch joins the main trunk. Cutting into the branch collar allows decay to expand into the main trunk of the tree.

- Always make pruning cuts on the outside of the branch collar
- Do not leave branch stubs, living or dead
- Use sharp hand tools designed for pruning and wear safety equipment
- Do not paint wounds with pruning paint

It does not prevent decay and may interfere with wound closure

- Homeowners should never climb a tree to prune limbs or attempt to prune limbs near overhead power lines
- Never remove more than 1/3 of the live crown in a single pruning

### Pruning of trees prior to storms and hurricanes

Prune for strength and form (see back cover).

Topping a large tree causes excessive sprouting of weakly attached new branches, and also increases wind resistance by creating denser branching patterns. Excessive lifting creates a condition where trees become top-heavy. Both of these methods of pruning increase the chances of wind damage in the long run.

### Topping

Topping is a type of pruning where most of the canopy is removed from a tree, leaving mostly branch stubs. Topping initiates decay in the trunk and main branches and attracts wood boring insects. Never top a tree or allow anyone to top one of your trees.

Topping is equivalent to butchering a tree. Competent arborists do not top trees.

**Topping is a violation of Broward County ordinance!**

### Excessive Lifting

Lifting trees is a common pruning practice where the lower branches of the tree are removed to provide clearance for cars, structures, etc. Over lifting, or excessive thinning of trees is a poor pruning practice, however. This type of pruning causes trees to be top heavy, reduces trunk taper and increases chances of branch breakage. It also disfigures the natural form of the tree.

**Over lifting of trees is a violation of Broward County ordinance!**

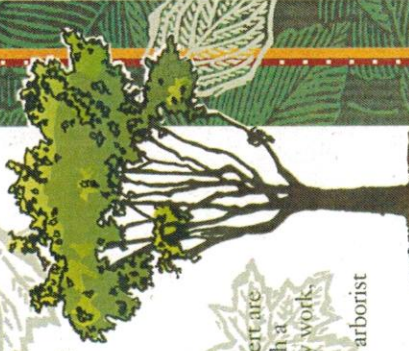
### Choosing a Tree Service/Arborist

Homeowners who rush to accept the service of a tree expert are frequently taken advantage of by fly-by-night amateurs with a pickup truck and chainsaw. The result of this is poor quality work and greater long term costs.

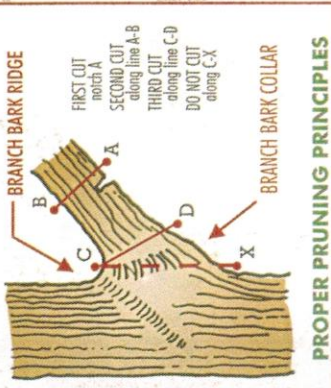
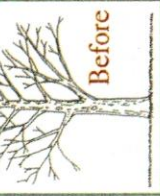
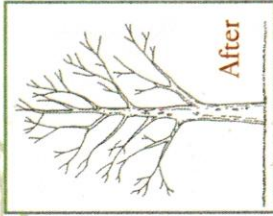
The best option is to choose a tree care professional. The arborist (tree care professional) you will want to hire should:

- have an occupational license and a bonafide business in the community
- be listed in the telephone directory "yellow pages" commonly under tree service
- be fully insured for property damage, personal liability and worker compensation
- and be a member of a professional association such as the National Arborist Association, the Florida Arborist Association, the International Society of Arboriculture, or the American Society of Consulting Arborists.

### Lifting



Topping



### PROPER PRUNING PRINCIPLES



## Introduction

To think of Florida without imagining palm lined beaches, pink flamingos, and blue water is difficult. Palms trees are synonymous with our semi-tropical climate. This brochure will help you learn the basic needs of these tropical treasures.

## Palm Selection:

Look at neighborhood palms and see which ones seem to thrive in your area. Take advantage of the many local nurseries within the County where you can see the many varieties of palms available. In most cases you can select and tag the palm that will be delivered to your property. Finally, you might go to one of your County Library Branches and look at a Florida Landscape Plants reference guide. You will get many ideas for Species selection and placement that could save much time and effort.

Lethal Yellowing susceptibility of many of Florida's palms makes it prudent to select resistant species. This disease causes the bloom to turn black and the immature nuts to drop, followed by the yellowing of fronds from the lower to the upper areas, culminating in bud rot and subsequent death. Lethal Yellowing is transferred by the insect planthopper or leafhopper (*Myndus crudus*). Manila palms and many varieties of the Coconut palm are particularly vulnerable to this disease.

Native palms are generally more resistant. These include Cabbage or Sabal palm, Royal palm, Purotis palm, Florida Thatch palm and Key Thatch palms. Non-native

resistant palms include Alexander, Queen, Washingtonia, Maypan Coconut, and other species. Further information about resistant palms can be obtained from the Broward County Cooperative Extension Service.

## Planting:

**Location:** Look at the proposed location and visualize the palm as full grown. Look up to see if there is clearance from buildings and overhead obstructions. A Royal Palm may grow into power lines in no time. Another example would be the planting of Coconut Palms within a parking lot or thin highway median strips. Tell your nursery professionals where you will be planting the palm and they will be able to help with the particular characteristics of each palm species.

**Depth:** Plant at the same height as grown except when the roots are exposed. In this case they should be planted with the soil level one half inch higher than the lower edge of the trunk. Use clean sand next to the trunk.

**Soil:** Palms do not like to be planted in heavy muck or clay soils since these soils hold too much water. They do well in sand and gravel-sand soils where water drains quickly. The perfect soil would be a sandy soil with 10 to 20 percent muck or peat to hold the water and provide nutrients.

If the palm must be planted in rock or compacted marl/clay soil, then the hole around the root ball should be filled with a sandy peat replacement soil which is mounded in a low hill 6 inches above grade and 6 feet in width.

**Initial Fertilization:** Blend in fertilizer at the time of planting to enrich the soil removed from the hole. The mixing rate of two ounces of palm fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter (measured at ground level) should be sufficient. After watering and settling in the tree, one additional ounce of slow release palm fertilizer per three inches of trunk on the ground will get the tree off to a good start.

**Watering In:** Water-in a new palm as you plant it. "Rock" the ball gently to remove all trapped air in the new hole. Working in the soil around the root ball as it is watered-in with a shovel or rod is also very helpful. This is most important when planting large palms.

## Watering For Healthy Establishment:

Water a newly planted palm at least twice a week for the first six months. Add enough water to insure a moisture penetration of a foot and a half (18 inches). Sandy soil requires more watering to maintain the moisture.

## Established Palms:

**Fertilization:** Established palms should be fertilized with a slow release palm fertilizer a minimum of twice per year; four applications are better. A palm fertilizer in the form of slow release pellets and contains roughly 12 to 13 percent nitrogen, 3 to 4 percent potassium, 12 to 13 percent phosphorus plus trace elements. This is commercially known as a slow release "Palm Special" and labeled (12-4-12) or (13-3-13). The application rate for established palms is eight ounces (half pound) per inch of trunk diameter. Spread the fertilizer in the area one foot away

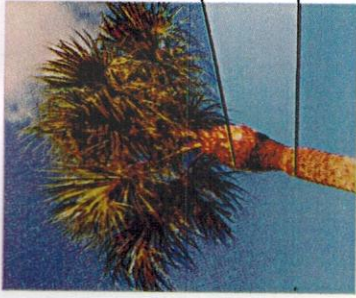
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## Pruning

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Example of "pencil topping"

'crown shaft' which is a green column below the fronds. Additionally, repeated hurricane cuts produce a condition known as "pencil top" which is the narrowing of the palm trunk just below the fronds.

Hurricane winds may snap off the top of the palm where the thinning has occurred allowing the top of the palm to become airborne.

For trees without crown shafts, prune fronds by sawing them off close to the trunk after they have turned brown.

**County Code prescribes that Palms will be pruned leaving fronds within an angle from the 9:00 to 3:00 o'clock positions.** This means that the "Hurricane Cut" or "Candle Cuts" are not only harmful to the Palm, but are County Code violations. Code violations can result in fines, tree removals and tree replacement.

Never pull or rip off fronds. Permanent wounds to the trunk can occur allowing for fungus or rot invasion and produces ever-enlarging holes in the trunk. Removing green fruit and seeds with pruning saws, does not hurt the palm and keeps the ground clear. The blooming stalk can be removed as soon as it appears.

## Mulching:

Palms benefit from an **18 inch layer of mulch applied six inches away from the trunk** and 2 to 6 inches thick. Use commercial sterilized mulch. Freshly ground tree mulch can contain the organism responsible for the lethal disease '**Ganoderma Butt Rot**.' Dead Palm trees containing the deadly fungus '*Ganoderma zonatum*,' can be ground up into a fine looking but lethal mulch. Tools used in removing dead trees should be sterilized with rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) or hydrogen peroxide ( $H_2O_2$ ), to prevent transferring the fungus to other palms.

## More Important Stuff!!

- **Puncture Wounds Never Heal! Do not** use nails or screws to attach lights or signs to the trunk. **Do not** use climbing spikes to climb any tree
- **Do not** use a machete to remove fronds as an overstrike will wound the trunk of the tree. One must be very careful using a chain saw for the same reason.
- **Do not** use String Trimmers to trim away grass from the trunk. Use mulch to keep grass away. String Trimmers can slowly remove the bark from the base of the tree.
- **Do not** plant in openings in concrete or black top of less than six feet in diameter.
- **Do not** place sprinklers close to the trunk of a palm.
- **Do use** Manganese Sulfate to treat a frizzle topped palm.



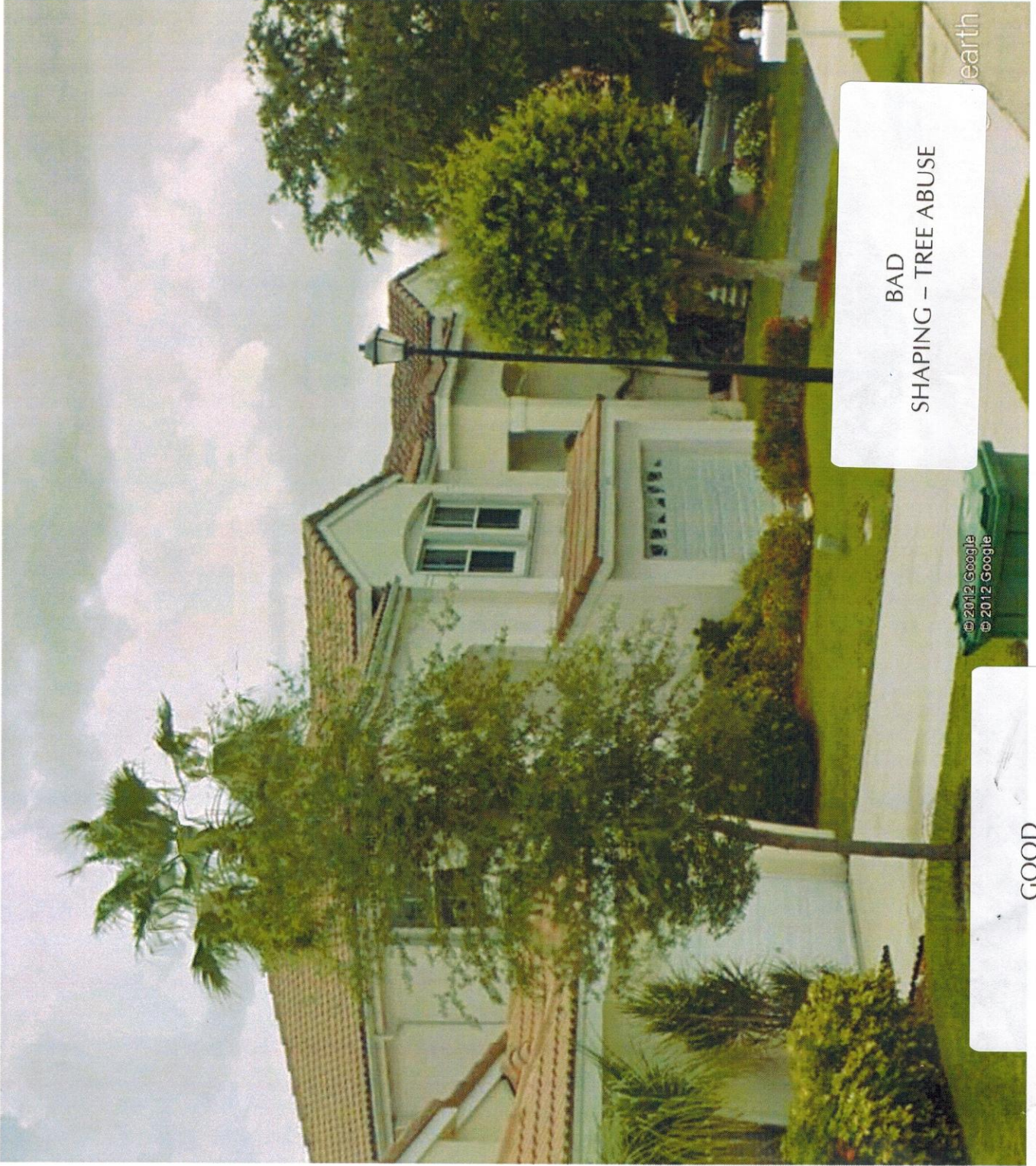
from the trunk and out to the drip line of the tree. When possible, punch holes in the fertilized area to help with the surface absorption. Thoroughly soak the area after application with an open hose.

**Water:** During dry periods, soak the base of the tree with an open hose at least twice a month.

## Pruning Palm Trees:

Avoid pruning trees whenever possible. Most palms shed their fronds naturally, but others drop the fronds after some time. When it is necessary to prune the trees, never remove fronds that do not hang below a line parallel to the ground. The hurricane or candle cut pruning of palms is a violation of Broward County Code and is subject to enforcement action. As palms recycle nutrients from the browning fronds to the heart of the palm (translocation of nutrients), frond removal deprives the tree of needed nutrients and weakens its defenses against invasive molds and fungi. Allowing self-pruning or self-cleaning is especially important for species that have a





BAD  
SHAPING - TREE ABUSE

GOOD  
NATURAL GROWTH HABIT

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Google earth

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GOOD  
NATURAL GROWTH HABIT

BAD  
SHAPING - TREE ABUSE

Southwest 14th Place

Google earth

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Google earth

feet  
meters

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3







Always call 811 before you dig.

11 Plantation Road DeBary, FL 32713

(800) 638-4097

sunshine811.com

Dear Homeowner Association:

All homeowners in your association need to know that a free call to 811 before digging will help keep their family and neighborhood safe. Why? Because many utility services run underground – often through yards. If you dig without first having those underground lines located and marked, you could run into a problem similar to a homeowner in Pensacola.

That homeowner was doing a simple weekend project – planting a bougainvillea. It ended with 15 firefighters, two emergency medical services technicians, four fire trucks, one ambulance, one gas company emergency response vehicle, and a gas company employee! That homeowner punctured a gas line buried in his yard when he thrust a post-hole digger 22 inches into the ground.

It could have all been avoided with a free call to 811. And that's what we want you to tell the homeowners in your association.

**Spread the word today!**

Please visit [www.sunshine811.com](http://www.sunshine811.com) and click on the Homeowners Association button. At the link you'll find an ad and story for your newsletter, a button for your website and a link to order our homeowner cards.

**Landscapers need to call too**

If your association uses landscapers, make sure that they also know about this free service.

Know what's below. Call 811 Before You Dig. Safe digging is no accident. Help stop digging accidents in your neighborhood and spread the word today!

Thank you for your help in spreading this important public safety message.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Ritter".

Cheryl Ritter

Sunshine 811 Damage Prevention Manager