PALM TREE FLOWER DROP MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES
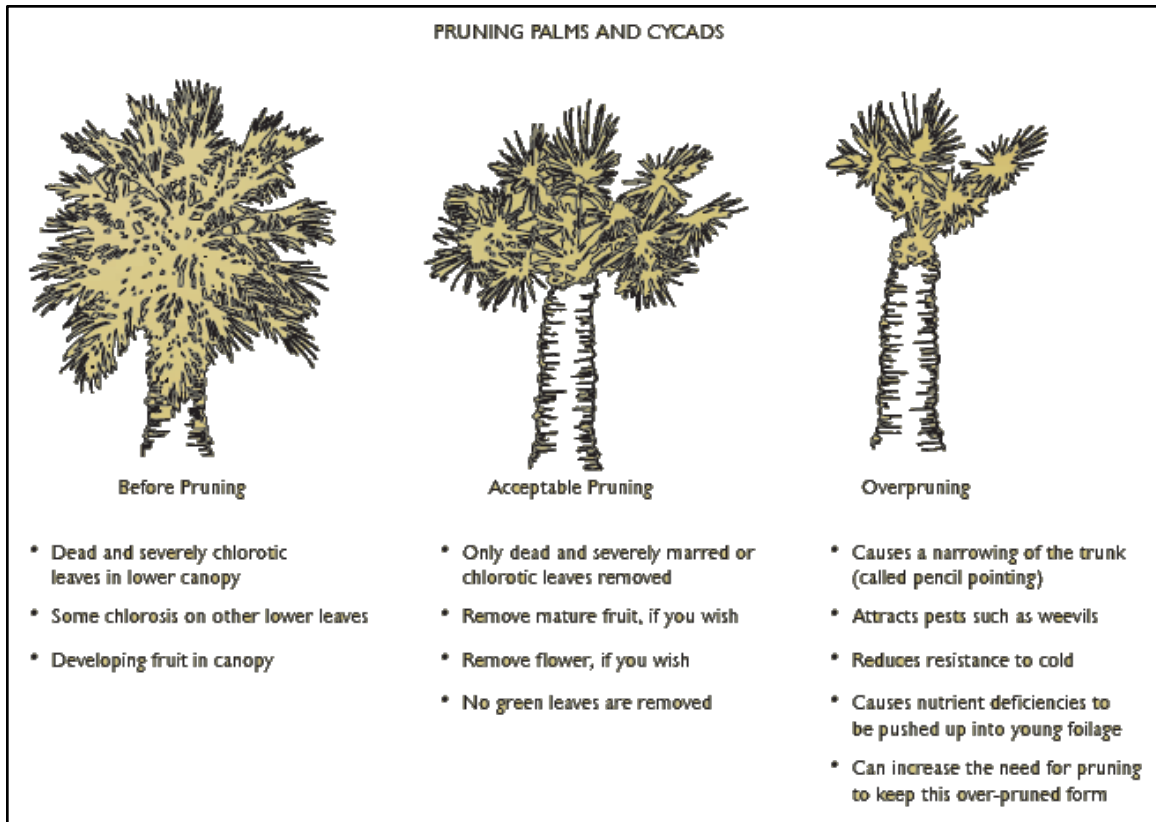
Scott Reese
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Beginning in late May and early June many varieties of Palm trees will begin to flower and eventually will drop dried flowers to the ground and into pools. The wind can carry seeds several hundred feet depending upon the height of the tree and wind speed. Many species of trees are very prolific in the production of flowers and seed drop can continue for a month or more. Almost every home in Montage is within range of a neighbors palm tree flower drop. Here is some information to consider in dealing with the issue that may also help you maintain a positive relationship with your neighbors.

The Washingtonian variety of Palm (California Fan Palm and Mexican Fan Palm) generally present the most difficulty as they are generally the very prolific seed producers, the tallest trees and currently represent the greatest number of palm trees in Montage home landscapes. They are widely used because they are the least costly, most available and fastest growing of the palms used in Coachella Valley landscapes. They do have some downsides including seed production. Queen Palms are the second most frequently used palm and also are prolific seed producers.

The traditional "safe date" to trim Mexican Fan Palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) is between June 1 and June 15. By then all the seed stalks that are going to be produced for the year should be mature enough to be cut off and eliminated, thus preserving all the energy the tree puts into flower and seed production. Trimming your trees earlier may lead to seed stalks coming out afterward and will make a mess until they are trimmed off again. There is always a chance that a late stalk will pop out, but it is pretty rare with Fan Palms. California Fan Palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) run about a month later than the Mexican Fan Palms. The traditional "safe date" for pruning them is after July 15 each year.

When exactly to trim your palms depends on seasonal weather variations and your specific conditions and requirements. If you have a pool or your neighbors have pools it might be important for you to get your palm trimmed a little earlier and within a short time of noticing the flowering head developing. Most people want their palms trimmed before the fruit is mature. Palms should generally be pruned by September at the latest.

There is a tendency to over-prune palm trees. The general rule of thumb is to prune palm fronds up to the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock position and no higher than the 10 and 2 position. Palm leaves are necessary to maintaining the health of trees and can be remaining on the tree for two or three years without issue. Frequently, palms in the desert are sometime over-pruned out concern of periodic high winds. The following graphic from the City of Palm Desert Landscape Maintenance Manual demonstrates the proper pruning technic. More useful information from this manual, and other articles about desert landscaping can be found on the Landscape Care page on the Montage at Mission Hills Website by Clicking Here.

PRUNING PALMS AND CYCADS

Before Pruning

* Dead and severely chlorotic leaves in lower canopy
* Some chlorosis on other lower leaves
* Developing fruit in canopy

Acceptable Pruning

* Only dead and severely marred or chlorotic leaves removed
* Remove mature fruit, if you wish
* Remove flower, if you wish
* No green leaves are removed

Overpruning

* Causes a narrowing of the trunk (called pencil pointing)
* Attracts pests such as weevils
* Reduces resistance to cold
* Causes nutrient deficiencies to be pushed up into young foilage
* Can increase the need for pruning to keep this over-pruned form

Here are some ideas to help you manage (not solve) the problem if get frequent flower drop in your pool.

1. You can purchase skimmer basket filter bags. that can be used in your skimmer basket or in you filter basket to stop the flow into your filter. Here's link with information about filter bags. https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0728CHXMX?psc=1

You can also purchase a floating skimmer which will run from a connection a pool vac / intake connection to augment your current single skimmer and clean you pool of more quickly. You can put a filter bag in these devices as well. The ratings on all of these are very good. This will effectively double your skimmer capacity. Here are some links with examples of floating skimmers.

* https://www.skim-a-round.com/?gclid=CjwKEAjw07nJBRDG_tvshefHhWQSJABRcE-Z9mu_s4p3B9-t172tofkqyq80NwyTl-CYM2KouGS1-hoCdwbw_wcB
* https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0087QDFBA?psc=1&smid=AKGEWS8T7WCZ7
* https://www.amazon.com/PoolSkim-Pool-Skimmer-Cleaner/dp/B002WKOEGM/ref=sr_1_18?ie=UTF8&qid=1496240443&sr=8-18&keywords=pool+leaf+skimmer