

Hammocks Happenings

The Hammocks: The Nicest Community on the Sun Coast
November 2, 2017

Below please find a number of 'Items of Interest' regarding River Wilderness and the Hammocks.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- The Hammocks HOA's Annual Member's meeting will be Tuesday, November 14th, at 6:30 PM at the RWGCC main dining room. Following the Member's meeting there will be an 'organizational' meeting and after that there will be a monthly HOA board meeting.
- RW Master HOA's September meeting will be Tuesday, November 14th, at 10:00 AM in the RWGCC Private Function Room. *Note the time and date change for the November meeting.*

Welcome Aboard!

The Hammocks HOA and the entire Hammocks neighborhood would like to welcome the following new neighbors:

- Hugh and Carol McGuire
12159 Red Leaf Road
- Lin Ferrol
3315 Woodland Fern Drive
- Jim and Mary Jo Martin
12108 Maple Ridge Drive

Welcome, one and all.

Hammock's Fall Fest

Coming to a pool area near you, the 2017 Hammock's Fall Fest. This is going to be a great opportunity for year around residents, snow-birds and new neighbors to 'meet and greet' all while enjoying a beverage, a sandwich and the great Florida weather. Bring your favorite beverage, a dish to share and a folding chair to the Hammock's Pool area on Sunday November 5th at 1:00 PM.

See the attached flyer for additional details.

Friends of Rocky Bluff Library Book Sale

The Friends of Rocky Bluff Library holds two book sales a year using books that have been donated to the library. The fall book sale will be held November 1-4 at the Rocky Bluff Library, 3750 US 301 Ellenton, FL.

The hours are:

Wednesday, November 1, 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM ('Friends' members only, but you can join at the door.)

Thursday, November 2, 12:00 PM to 6 PM (All buyers welcome.)

Friday, November 3, 10 AM to 6 PM (All buyers welcome.)

Saturday, November 4, 9 AM to 4 PM (All buyers welcome.)

The book sale needs customers so mark your calendars and then attend this important fund-raising event. The book sale also needs strong volunteers to move boxes around, unpack books and prepare the displays. The set-up work will be done all day Monday, October 30. For more information or to contact the Friends of Rocky Bluff Library go to their website:

<http://www.friendsofrockybluff.org/home.php>

Palm Trees

Palm trees are a symbol of Florida living. Unfortunately, there are several very lethal diseases that can and do attack these grand tree specimens. And, for the most part, there are few if any preventive measures that can be taken. As a result, if a palm becomes infected it will decay and will have to be removed. Four of the most prevalent diseases found in our area are Lethal Yellowing, Texas Phoenix palm decline, Fusarium decline and Ganoderma butt rot. Below are two short articles that discuss how to identify if your palm is infected and what do to if it is.

Palm Tree Disease – Ganoderma is Incurable

Posted July 17th, 2013 by [Kara Claus](#) & filed under [Landscaping](#)

Palm Tree Disease – Ganoderma is Incurable

Palm trees symbolize the tropics in the public imagination. Coconut palms swaying in the breeze adorn advertisements for Florida's beaches and resorts. Palms are a dominant feature in the landscape in housing developments throughout Florida. As landscape plants, palms are valued for their unique shape and the intricate texture and form of their leaves and stems. Their variety, beauty, and adaptability have made them some of the most prized landscape plants in the warmer areas of the state.

Despite their durability and adaptability, a number of diseases do affect palms in Florida. Lethal yellowing, an incurable disease, has greatly reduced the population of coconut palms on the lower east and west coasts of the state. Research into this disease has identified several resistant varieties of coconut, which are being used to rebuild coconut populations in affected areas. Control of the disease can also be obtained with antibiotics, although this method is costly and temporary at best.

Another serious disease of palms has recently made its presence known in south Florida, where palms are a dominant part of the landscape. Ganoderma butt rot of palms is a lethal and incurable disease which affects mature palms. The causal organism *Ganoderma zonatum*, a type of shelf or bracket fungus, was only identified by scientists at the University of Florida, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, in 1994. This disease is particularly insidious in that it attacks only mature trees. In addition, it seems that very few if any palms are resistant to this disease.

The symptoms of Ganoderma begin with the older fronds withering, drooping and turning brown. The leaflets often roll back along the petioles. The fronds then droop parallel to the trunk. The fronds do not break off but are retained on the trunk. New growth slows, decreases in size and becomes pale green or yellow.

As older fronds continue to die, younger leaves may show nutrient deficiencies. They may wilt periodically, and the tips may turn brown. Death of the tree usually occurs within 6 to 12 months after symptoms develop, although in some instances they may hang on for several years after the first conk is produced. Such trees should be removed upon identification to prevent possible contamination of nearby palms.

Additional symptoms include bleeding or a reddish exudate which stains the trunk and the formation of a conk or bracket fungus on the lower trunk. The conk is often present on the lower trunk soon after the symptoms of decline begin. The presence of a conk is proof that the tree has Ganoderma. Sometimes conks are not produced so that absence of a conk does not mean that a palm may not be infected. The conk is the reproductive body of the fungus. In our area, conks may be produced at any time. Initially, the conk is nothing more than a soft, white circular blob on the tree about an inch in diameter. It starts out flat against the tree. As it develops, it extends outward as a shelf, but is still soft and white. Older conks are kidney shaped, usually woody, somewhat shiny, with colored bands of reddish brown and lighter shades.

At maturity conks become swollen along the outer edge, revealing a white lower surface where spores are produced. Millions of spores may be released from a single conk. The spores act like tiny seeds and may be easily spread by the wind to healthy palms.

At present, it is assumed that all palms are susceptible to Ganoderma butt rot. There is no treatment for the disease. Symptoms of decline with the presence of a conk is positive proof that a palm has the disease. Infected palms should be cut down immediately. The best method of disposal of the trunk is burning to destroy the fungus. Palms should not be left in the landscape after cutting. This will only result in the production of infectious spores.

If possible, the stump should also be removed and burned. If not, it should be watched for the production of conks which should be removed as soon as they start to form. These can be burned or placed in a plastic bag and put in the garbage.

The diseased palm should not be replaced with another palm as fungus present in the soil and roots of the diseased tree will probably infect the new tree. Trees other than palms

are not susceptible to the disease. If you must replant a new palm, you can try to remove all the old soil and roots and bring in fresh soil. This may or may not work in the long run. Soil fumigation has not been shown to have any effect in eliminating the fungus from the soil, as it can survive within bits of wood or decayed roots in the soil.

It is important to avoid injuries to the roots and trunks of palms to avert the possibility of creating a wound which may permit spores to infect a new palm tree. Periodic observation and quick removal and proper disposal of diseased palms are the major methods of fighting this devastating disease.

Some of the above information has been provided by the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Office. If you need help regarding your landscape, we at Garden Services are fully licensed & insured to handle all of your irrigation, landscaping, maintenance and tree service needs whether it's a residential, commercial or homeowner association property.

Protect your palm trees from fatal diseases

Sally Scalera, For FLORIDA TODAY

If you have palms planted in your landscape, you're going to want to read this article all the way through. We have a few relatively new diseases that affect palms, and one that has been around for a long time: *Ganoderma butt rot*.

For some background, all palms, as well as cycads and other palm-like plants, are susceptible to *Ganoderma butt rot*, a fatal disease with no known cure. It is easily spread by wind blown spores and dirty shovels containing contaminated soil.

The fungal genus *Ganoderma* is a group of wood-decaying fungi that are found throughout the world on all types of wood, including conifers, hardwood and softwood trees and palms. There are many different species of this fungus, but only one is a pathogen of palms in Florida. That fungus is *Ganoderma zonatum*.

The conk is the most easily identifiable structure associated with the fungus. When the conk first starts to form on the side of a palm trunk or stump, it is a solid white mass that is relatively soft when touched. The "white button" is the beginning stage of the conk. As the conk matures, a small shelf or bracket will start to appear. Eventually, it will form a very distinct shelf-like structure that is quite hard, with a reddish-brown top surface and a white underside. A mature conk will have distinct zones, hence the name *G. zonatum*.

Once a palm is infected with *G. zonatum*, the fungus will move with that palm to the location in which it is transplanted. The primary symptom that may be observed is a wilting, which can range from mild to severe, of all the fronds but the spear leaf. Other symptoms can best be described as a general decline, slower growth and off-color foliage. However, these symptoms alone should not be used for diagnosis of Ganoderma butt rot, since other disorders and diseases may also cause these symptoms. Only when these symptoms are accompanied by the development of the conk can the palm be diagnosed with Ganoderma butt rot. It has also been observed that conks can form prior to any obvious wilting or decline symptoms. The opposite is also true, where the palm can die before the appearance of any conks.



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Photo

Conks are growing on this palm tree trunk. (Photo: Sally Scalera/For FLORIDA TODAY)

In general, the fungus will be located in the lower 5 feet of the trunk. This has three implications. First, this means that the fungus was not spread by pruning tools, since it is not associated with the fronds. Second, only the lower trunk portion should NOT be chipped up and used for mulch. Third, there are no fungicides that can systemically protect the palm either before, during or after infection.

Once you observe a conk, the palm should be removed immediately for safety reasons. These palms are likely to be the first ones blown down in heavy winds. Because the fungus survives in the soil, do not plant another palm or palm-like plant in the same spot where a palm has died from Ganoderma butt rot. If your palm dies and all of the fronds are hanging down around the trunk, but there are no conks present, cut it down but leave the stump. The stump can be monitored for the appearance of conks to determine if Ganoderma was the cause of death, or not.

A relatively new disease that has shown up is a threat to just Queen palms and Mexican fan palms. The symptoms for Queen palms are the opposite of Ganoderma butt rot. For this disease, the lower or oldest three fronds will turn brown, then the next three, and this will continue until the entire canopy is brown but still held upright. This disease moves rapidly and the entire canopy can turn brown in a couple of months. The pathogen is *Fusarium oxysporum* and is called *Fusarium decline*. Once again, there is no cure for this disease and the recommendation is to not replant with a queen palm or Mexican fan palm. Another difference, when compared to Ganoderma butt rot, is that *Fusarium* can be spread by contaminated pruning equipment. Sterilizing pruning equipment between each palm is a must for Queen and Mexican fan palms since this is a common way the disease can be spread, possibly throughout an entire community.

The newest palm disease, confirmed in 2008, came to light due to reports of substantial numbers of Cabbage or Sabal palms, Sabal palmetto, dying in Manatee and Hillsborough counties. Observations of symptomatic palms in Manatee County, followed by removal and analysis of trunk core samples, have confirmed that a phytoplasma is consistently present in these effected in palms. The preliminary analysis indicates that the phytoplasma that causes *Texas Phoenix palm decline* is also causing the decline of the cabbage palms. The previously known palm hosts for this particular phytoplasma are *Phoenix canariensis*, *Phoenix dactylifera*, *Phoenix sylvestris* and *Syagrus romanzoffiana*. Unfortunately, we can now add Sabal palmetto to this list. This disease is spread by sap-feeding insects, such as planthoppers, treehoppers and psyllids.

The best way to protect your palms from all diseases is to make sure that they are not susceptible hosts for the pathogens. This can be accomplished by providing them with all of the nutrients they need, in the correct amounts. This would entail a soil test so, if you are interested in finding out more, email me at sasc@ufl.edu.

The one cultural practice that can also impact the palm's vigor is pruning. The removal of any frond, other than those that are totally brown, is essentially the same as removing food from the plant. The green fronds are where photosynthesis occurs, and the carbohydrates are produced for the plant to use for growth and survival.

Sally Scalera is an urban horticulture agent and master gardener coordinator for the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences.

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