

Fusarium Wilt of Palms

TREE DOCTOR TIPS

Fusarium Wilt of Palms (*Fusarium oxysporum*)

DESCRIPTION:

Fusarium wilt of palms is caused by a fungus that blocks the vascular tissue (xylem), which transports water and nutrients. There is no cure, so infected trees eventually die.

HOSTS:

Different strains of *Fusarium oxysporum* cause wilts on different palm species. Two primary strains are *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *canariensis* and *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *palmarum*. Palms attacked by this contagious disease include Canary Island, Queen, Mexican Fan (also called Washington palm), Senegal date and California fan.

BIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMS:

The disease usually starts with wilting and yellowing of older, lower fronds, and discoloration normally begins on one side of the petiole.

Another fungal disease, pink rot (*Gliocladium* blight), often accompanies fusarium wilt. This opportunistic disease targets old, weak or injured plants.

MANAGEMENT:

Since pink rot and fusarium wilt of palms often occur together, the first step in management is treating the pink rot with a fungicide.

Infected fronds should be pruned away and pruning tools should be disinfected before they are used again. Sawdust containing fungal spores can be carried on the pruning equipment and chainsaw. Symptoms can take up to 18 months to appear. Remove and destroy all parts of infected trees. The fungal spores can survive in compost.

Purchase palms from reputable sellers and plant them in well-drained soil.

Since there is no cure for this disease, avoid contamination by sterilizing pruning tools between uses. Use disease resistant species and remove and destroy infected palms to prevent the spread of the fungus to healthy palms. Consult with your local arborist for more information on protecting your trees.



A



B

FIGURE A. TYPICAL FIELD SYMPTOMS ON A FROND

FIGURE B. CANARY ISLAND DATE PALM DYING FROM FUSARIUM

The scientists at **The Davey Institute Research and Diagnostic Laboratories** support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult The Davey Institute's Plant Health Care Treatment Guide.

Scan the QR code to learn more about insects and diseases that may impact your property.

