

Editorial: UF Extension Service ... Caldwell soundly advises the plant lovers among us

Staff Reports

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When it comes to ranking experts in their fields, we believe the public outreach agents for the local University of Florida Extension Service are tough to beat.

They know their stuff and are eager to share — especially when it comes to consumer protection.

Doug Caldwell is one of those authorities. His column in the Daily News is always a must-read.

One of his latest contributions is a warning about unskilled and unscrupulous tree pruners.

He says they roam neighborhoods and play on fears that untrimmed, shaggy palms will be dangerous in the event of high winds.

But the crews' clumsy, hacksaw methods, Caldwell advises, do more harm than good.

He says cutting off too many fronds at the top will cripple trees' ability to generate nutrition and will make trees more vulnerable to losing their heads.

The bottom line: skip so-called "hurricane cuts."

He suggests doing business only with established, reputable companies; if customers are in doubt, they can check tree-pruning tips at the extension office's website, collier.ifas.ufl.edu; email him at dougbug@ufl.edu; or call him at 353-4244, ext. 203.

Caldwell is a tried-and-true public servant. He shares expert advice that is good for our plants and our pocketbooks.

We are happy to relay his know-how to help the public avoid hurting rather than helping expensive plants.



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Also see Collier County Extension Youtube on proper palm pruning:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tt76hXRHBoA>