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## PALM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. The leaves on my palms are being affected by something that appears to be a disease. There are brown spots appearing on several areas on each leaf. What is wrong and how can I control it?

A. South Florida's high humidity is ideal for the palm leafspot which is common on many species of palms and is caused by a fungus called *Stigmina palmivora* (Sacc.). In Florida the fungus has been officially reported on the following palm hosts:

- Arecastrum romanzoffianum* (Chamisso) Beccari  
*Butia capitata* (Martius) Beccari var. *capitata*  
*Caryota mitis* Loureiro  
*Phoenix canariensis* Chabaud  
*Phoenix dactylifera* Linnaeus  
*Phoenix loureirii* Kunth.  
*Phoenix reclinata* Jacquin  
*Phoenix roebelenii* O'Brien  
*Phoenix rupicola* Anderson  
*Roystonea regia* O. F. Cook  
*Sabal palmetto* (Walter) Loddiges  
*Thrinax microcarpa* Sargent  
*Veitchia merrillii* (Beccari) H. E. Moore

This disease is usually found on plants

grown under glass or lath shade where insufficient light is provided. Any time that a palm is slowed down in growth due to poor cultural conditions, the plant does appear more susceptible to fungus and bacterial diseases.

The palm leafspot first appears as a minute, circular, tan spot which is transparent when held to the light. As this lesion develops it becomes circular to elongate, light to medium brown, depressed, with a dark brown to black spot in the center surrounded by a somewhat diffuse yellow halo. The yellow halo serves as a field characteristic to help identify the disease. Several of these lesions may coalesce to form irregular shaped spots on the rachis of the palm frond. Severity of the disease may be reduced by removing the infected leaves and spraying the foliage at regular intervals with a fungicide.

### REFERENCE

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