



Guidelines for pruning and spraying of Palm Trees

Control of the Red Palm Weevil Regulations

As stipulated in Regulation 6(6) of Legal Notice 42 of 2009 (Plant Quarantine Act CAP. 433) on the Control of the Red Palm Weevil, all susceptible plants frond pruning or any similar activity shall be carried out in collaboration with and under the supervision of the Plant Health Department which shall give proper and adequate instructions for such pruning. Any such or similar activity cannot be carried out unless a written approval for such pruning or similar activity has been obtained from the Department, not less than fifteen days prior to the undertaking of the actual pruning or similar activity to be undertaken.

No activity of whatever nature, concerning any susceptible plant material, including fronds, may be undertaken unless prior written authorisation has been obtained from the Director, who may, from time to time, issue relative guidelines in terms of these regulations and in terms of the Act. Any person responsible for such activity without the requisite written authorisation, shall be liable to a penalty in terms of article 30(1) of the Act.

General

The palm trees from where the fronds are cut have to be sprayed with an appropriate, locally registered insecticide. This has to be repeated for three consecutive times in order to best protect the trees.

The fronds have to be cut as short as possible so as to minimize infective areas which are generally concentrated at the base of the fronds.

The base of the frond has to be sealed with an appropriate pruning sealant. The thorns at the base should also be removed for safe handling.

Direct preventive and curative treatments

Preventive non chemical treatments

- Offshoots removal should be followed immediately by a wood filling application on the wound and 2 or 3 successive preventive insecticide spraying.

- Pruning in the places where green leaves are cut, preferably should be done in winter and immediately followed by 2 or 3 successive preventive insecticide treatments.
- The use of climbing systems with large spurs that wound the trunk deeply should be avoided.

Chemical treatments

- The preventive treatments must be executed to protect the palms but also to limit the dispersion of the pest: their purpose is to kill the adult weevils which arrive to the palms for egg-laying but also the adults when they emerge from the bases of the palms or from the trunk.
- In a radius of 1000 m around the place where infested palms have been detected or several weevils were trapped, all the palms should be treated immediately. An early reaction allows to limit the extension of the focus.
- Treatments by spraying insecticides are effective if they consist of true showers (10 to 20 litres of solution per palm) otherwise they are useless.
- For the date palm, trunk (up to 2 meters) and offshoots should be treated. For the *P. canariensis*, central leaves and bases of all the others leaves should be soaked with insecticides.
- The available insecticides for spraying treatment present a relatively short period of persistence that does not exceed around 4 weeks. Such a short period implies frequent spraying during the whole period of adult dispersion.

Curative treatments and palms destruction

- When symptoms of an infestation are not clearly established, it is preferable to treat the palm than to eliminate it. A good preventive treatment and regular control of the palm will allow, if actually infested, the palm not to become a focus of dispersion of the weevil. Regular control will rapidly allow establishing the infestation status of the palm. This procedure can allow saving high value trees and is much less expensive than eliminating systematically doubtful palms
- On the other hand, the elimination of clearly infested palm should be done as rapidly as possible. Nevertheless, if this operation can't be done as soon as the palm has been detected, immediate insecticides treatment as described before should be realized and repeated till the elimination of the palm. In too many places, infested palms have not been immediately eliminated or have remained too long without any efficient insecticide treatment. This situation has constituted the second cause of dispersion of the red palm weevil after the movements of palms that remains by far the main cause.

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