

Ganoderma Butt Rot is Fatal to Palms- Know what to look for!!!

If your palms look wilted, off-color and are dying, check for conks (shelf-fungus) at the base of the trunk. The conks are the give-away clue that it has ganoderma butt rot disease. It is frequently found on queen palms, areca palms, Canary Island Date palms and all other palms to a certain degree. There is no cure. Palm and soil need to be removed.



SUMMARY

- Ganoderma butt rot is caused by the fungus *Ganoderma zonatum*. This fungus degrades the lignin in the lower 4–5 feet of the trunk. It does not cause a soft rot, so the trunk seems hard.
- All palms are considered hosts of this fungus. This fungus is not a primary pathogen of any other plant family.
- Symptoms may include wilting (mild to severe) or a general decline. The disease is confirmed prior to palm death by observing the basidiocarp (conk) on the trunk. This is a hard, shelf-like structure that will be attached to the lower 4–5 feet of the palm trunk.
- A palm cannot be diagnosed with Ganoderma butt rot until the basidiocarp (conk) forms on the trunk, or the internal discoloration of the trunk is observed after the palm is cut down.
- You can take one or two of these mushrooms (in a plastic bag) and picture to the University of Florida/IFAS Extension located at 6700 Clark Road. There are always Master Gardeners and Horticulture specialists available to answer questions like this. They are open every day, Monday-Friday, and there is no charge
- The fungus is spread by spores.. Once the fungus becomes established in this dead wood, it will normally produce conks with millions of basidiospores that are easily moved by wind and water.
- Conditions that are conducive for disease development are unknown. There are currently no cultural or chemical controls for preventing the disease or for curing the disease once the palm is infected.
- A palm should be removed as soon as possible after the conks appear on the trunk. Remove as much of the stump and root system as possible when the palm is removed, or grind the stump. If neither is possible, monitor the stump for conks, and remove the conks as soon as they form.
- Because the fungus survives in the soil, planting another palm back in that same location is not recommended without special precautions.
- If you have never observed Ganoderma butt rot on the property, monitoring the palms once every six months will be adequate. Once you have observed the conks on palms or have a palm cut or fall down for any reason, monitor your palms at least once a month.
- Also, monitor the entire neighborhood, not just your yard. These spores blow with the wind, so it should be a community effort to reduce the spread of the spores of this lethal fungus

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