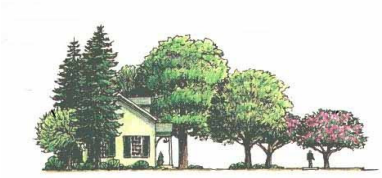

University of California Cooperative Extension
Central Coast & South Region

Center for Landscape and Urban Horticulture

FERTILIZING PALMS

Palms require large amounts of nitrogen, potassium, and magnesium and appear especially sensitive to certain micronutrient deficiencies. Macronutrient deficiencies usually occur as a result of insufficient nutrients in the soil. Nitrogen deficiency appears as a general yellowing of all leaves. Potassium and magnesium deficiency appear on the older leaves. Potassium deficiency shows as translucent orange or yellow flecking or speckling, and magnesium deficiency appears as a distinct orange-colored band around the outside of a leaf. Micronutrient deficiencies are on the newest leaves and are usually the result of environmental factors such as damaged roots or improper soil pH that affect the palm's ability to extract the nutrient from the soil. Iron deficiency shows as chlorosis, and manganese deficiency appears as chlorosis, stunting, and even frizzling. Deficiencies are more easily prevented than corrected by proper fertilization, good soil aeration, proper planting depth, root disease prevention, and proper soil pH. Palms respond best to a fertilizer with the N-P-K ratio of 3-1-3 or 3-1-2, all in slow-release form, and with magnesium and micronutrients.

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