Can Florida Afford Brown Palm Trees? Part 1
by Mary Jo Fahey
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With Florida losing its status as Hollywood East in 2015 and a $67 billion dollar tourism industry, can the state afford unhealthy looking Palm Trees?

Starting in the late 1990s, movie production incentives have been introduced in 40 states that compete for film and television production work outside of Los Angeles. In Florida, a cash rebate of 10%-22% on qualified in-state spending attracted projects such as Burn Notice, Dexter, Dolphin Tale, and Bloodline. Although Dolphin Tale and Bloodline have made Clearwater and the Florida Keys must-see destinations, state legislators have voted against production incentives for a fourth consecutive year. Georgia and Long Beach, California are now garnering Florida’s production business because the scenery looks similar.

Production Scouts in Florida Notice Stressed Palm Trees
Joanne Harris, a production scout and Florida native says, “It is sad to see the dying palms in South Florida. They add a flavor that is only found in a few areas of the country.” Although film and television production projects are being lured out of Florida, Joanne says television commercials and photography for print ads still use Florida locations. Shots need a complete tree as trunks without a canopy are nicknamed “elephant legs.”

High Profile Palms
Stressed Palm Trees are visible locally on property leased by corporations with headquarters that are out of state. Examples include Fort Lauderdale’s Whole Foods, Macy’s Furniture Gallery, Bank of America at the Galleria, Ocean Resort and Residences at the Conrad Fort Lauderdale Beach Hotel and Embassy Suites by Hilton on 17th Street. None of the managers at these locations who I contacted for this article had tackled the problem explaining that Palm Trees were outside the scope of their responsibility. Two of the managers said they had stressed trees on their own property and they would love to know what to do.

Experts in Davie Offering a Palm Management Workshop
If you’re a landscape architect, a grounds or facilities manager, an arborist, agronomist, a student who is exploring agroforestry, or even a homeowner with a stressed Palm Tree, there is a wonderful 2-day Palm Management Workshop offered at a University of Florida’s Research and Education Center in Davie. The class, that can accommodate as many as 45 people is an intensive that includes lunch and two field trips on the school’s property. Dr. Monica L. Elliott and her husband Dr. Timothy K. Broschat have created what they call “Palm School” that reflects Monica’s 15 years as a Palm researcher specializing in plant pathology and Tim’s 30 years of research in mineral nutrition and fertilization.

Multi-Part Series
To write this article, I attended Palm School in early December and I will be producing a report with broad strokes about Palm nutrition and disease in a multi-part series. While Palm Trees can deteriorate because of disease, an even bigger problem is malnutrition. Those who are responsible for the life of one or more Palm Trees will want to register for Monica and Tim’s 2-day workshop. The fee is $300 and continuing education units (CEUs) are provided for licensing requirements. The next workshop will be held March 7-8 (Tuesday and Wednesday from 7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day). Location: University of Florida Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, 3205 College Avenue, Davie, Florida. To register, contact Dr. Monica L. Elliott at melliott@ufl.edu.
Photos:

(1) filename: bloodline_marketing_photo_12_9_16.jpg
Caption: Actor Kyle Chandler, who portrays John Rayburn in Netflix's Bloodline, walks along the dock at the Moorings Village and Spa in Islamorada where Palm Trees look brown. Photo courtesy of Saeed Ayani/Netflix©

(2) filename: palm_macys_furniture_gallery.jpg
Caption: Syagrus romanzoffiana or Queen Palm outside Macy's Furniture Galley in Fort Lauderdale

(3) filename: palm_school_monica_2.JPG
Caption: Dr. Monica L. Elliott next to a Palm Tree with wounds. Palms are monocots that do not heal trunk wounds like dicots (hardwood trees).