



YUMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building Safety Division

Rural Metro Fire Department

Beware of Summer Fire Hazards

Among the thousands of trees that dot Yuma's landscape, perhaps none symbolizes the region more than the palm tree. With their stately trunks and thick, flowery masses of fronds, they liven up the urban scenery and offer a tropical atmosphere.

But when not maintained properly, palm trees can also create a deadly fire hazard--literally exploding into flames in a matter of minutes, according to fire officials.

Rural Metro Fire Marshal Curt Foster said palm--and other trees--become a serious fire hazard when they are not well trimmed. The danger is especially great when the leaves and fronds dry out and wind scatters them around a neighborhood.

"A Palm tree is like a torch; if it's not maintained properly, they can ignite anything under their canopy".

Besides palms, Ficus and Eucalyptus trees also pose high fire risk. Leaves from these tree's can accumulate on roofs and in yards--just waiting to ignite. Eucalyptus trees are oily and can easily ignite as well.

Branches from the heavier species of trees, such as Ficus and Eucalyptus, can also pose public safety hazards when they break off during windstorms. Palms, however, are less likely to cause serious damage in this manner because their fronds tend to be lighter, tree experts said.

The best advice for homeowners is to trim their trees in early fall, before the winds of Spring begin to blow. Fire officials also advise homeowners to clear any dry brush from the ground around their homes. Maintaining a fire safe property is the sole responsibility of the owner.

"Anything that has a branch on it or a frond on it that can either dry or catch fire or blow off in the wind and do damage poses a hazard,"

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