
TREE PRUNING & MAINTENANCE

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

JULY 10, 2025



TREE PRUNING PRACTICES CITY OF PALM DESERT

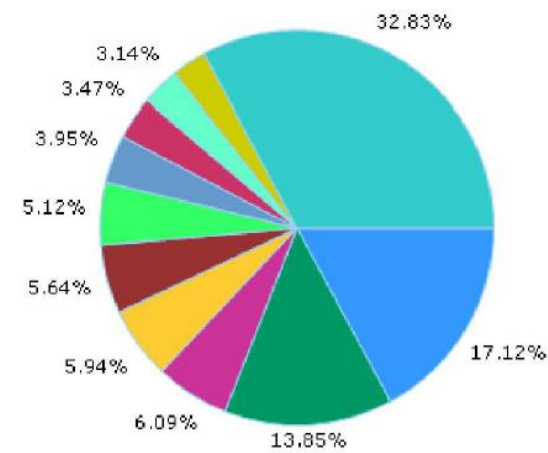
City Council Request:

- Review current pruning practices
- Assess impacts to wildlife
- Solicit expert input
- Determine whether changes are needed





Top 10 Species / Estimated Value



	Botanical	Common	Total	Pct.	Estimated Value
	Washingtonia filifera	CALIFORNIA FAN PALM	2,071	17.12%	\$16,336,310.00
	Washingtonia robusta	MEXICAN FAN PALM	1,676	13.85%	\$5,384,030.00
	Parkinsonia florida	BLUE PALO VERDE	737	6.09%	\$3,384,290.00
	Phoenix dactylifera	DATE PALM	719	5.94%	\$2,502,380.00
	Acacia aneura	MULGA	682	5.64%	\$1,112,380.00
	Acacia stenophylla	SHOESTRING ACACIA	619	5.12%	\$1,600,140.00
	Chilopsis linearis	DESERT WILLOW	478	3.95%	\$1,296,470.00
	Prosopis chilensis	CHILEAN MESQUITE	420	3.47%	\$4,652,910.00
	Tipuana tipu	TIPU	380	3.14%	\$743,500.00
	Vachellia farnesiana	SWEET ACACIA	346	2.86%	\$2,081,050.00
	Other	OTHER	3,972	32.83%	\$14,531,230.00
	Total Trees		12,100	100%	\$53,624,690.00

PALM DESERT’S URBAN FOREST

- 12,100 trees citywide
- Over 120 different species
- Estimated value of \$53.6M



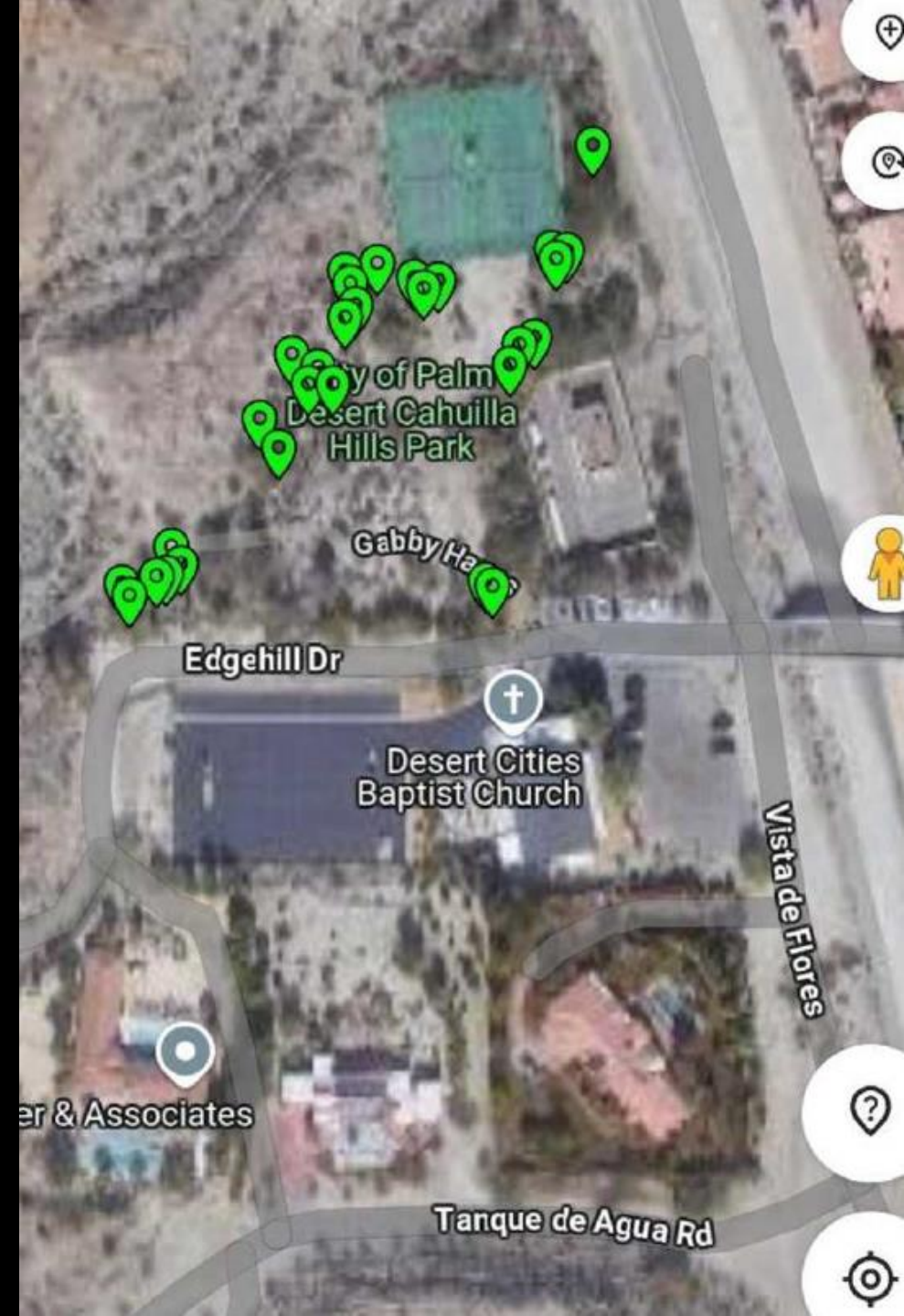
CURRENT PRUNING & MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

- Annual palm and date pruning
 - Hardwood tree pruning at least once every three years
 - Special focus on parking lots, playgrounds dog parks, high-traffic areas
 - Proper irrigation and pruning is critical for public safety and longevity of the tree
-

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE CONSIDERATIONS

- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- California Fish and Game Code §§ 3503, 3503.5, and 3513
- Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Lissette A Rios, M.E.M
Urban Biologist / ISA Certified Arborist, WE-15480A
Certified Associate Ecologist (CAE), ESA-213290



ENVIRONMENTAL AND WILDLIFE CONSIDERATIONS



- **Assessment and posting for migratory birds**
- **Ground level and aerial pre-work inspections**
- **Tree worker training for identification of wildlife signs**

WILDLIFE PRESENCE

- Tree marked with sign
- Report logged in tree management software
- Tree maintenance is delayed until nest is no longer active





NATURALISTIC PRUNING AREAS

- Baja Park
- Cahuilla Hills Park
- Desert Willow Circle
- Entrada del Paseo

PALM DESERT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Palm Desert
[Municipal Code](#)
Title 24
Environment and
Conservation

City of Palm Desert
[Landscape
Maintenance Guide](#)

ISA standard
techniques for
hardwood and palm
pruning

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA – RIVERSIDE PALM DESERT CAMPUS

Lynn C. Sweet, PhD

**Assistant Research
Ecologist & Principal
Investigator**



Fan palms provide critical habitat for birds and other wildlife increasingly threatened by development and drought.



Palm tree skirts offer valuable shade and support family activities like bird watching in our parks.



There are concerns about wildlife-human conflicts and the importance of maintaining clean, safe park environments.



Balancing habitat preservation with public use ensures parks remain welcoming for both wildlife and the community.



Arborists and landscape architects can best advise about balancing the need for community safety and health with the equal needs for natural areas, shade, recreation and habitat.



PUBLIC SAFETY

- Tree Health
 - Reduce instances of broken branches
 - Poor root systems
 - Dead plant material
- Weather Events
 - High winds
 - Rain
- High-Sensitivity Areas
 - Parks & playgrounds
 - Parking lots
 - Riparian areas

CONCLUSION

- Palm Desert maintains its urban forest in accordance with ISA standards
- Proper maintenance is critical for public safety
- Designated areas for limited pruning to provide wildlife habitat
- Continue to balance wildlife, safety, and recreation in public spaces

