

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PHOENIX CANARIENSIS FROM THE PICUDO ROJO



Originating from Asia, the Picudo Rojo (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) is decimating palm trees across the Balearic Islands.

In the past few years, the beetle has spread across the entire Island so treatment is now essential. Unfortunately the treatments available are not a guarantee, and if the tree is already infected but not outwardly visible, it may be too late.

Here is the treatment plan that I use. It isn't complicated, but it is essential that it is carried out regularly.

### THE PICUDO ROJO

If you see any of these around your tree or in the area, you need to take immediate action. Once a beetle finds a host tree, they lay eggs at the base of the youngest leaves. These hatch and it is the resulting larvae that cause the damage, excavating holes up to a metre long in the trunk, thereby weakening and eventually killing the host plant.



### SPOTTING THE SIGNS OF INFECTION

The first signs of infection may be a slight leaning to one side of the crown of the palm. Irregular fronds with stunted growth is another tell tale sign. The tree on the right is showing clearly the second stages of infection.



Infestation levels can be monitored using pheromone traps, and new eco-friendly methods are being developed using combinations of a pheromone lure and insecticide - attracting the Picudo and then killing them.

### TREATMENT PLAN

#### STEP 1 - REDUCE HIDING PLACES

Trees must be pruned professionally to avoid hiding places for the weevils. As soon as pruning has taken place, treatment must be applied as the scent of the cut fronds is a huge attraction to the beetle.

#### STEP 2 - CHOOSE YOUR POISON!

Although the rest of my garden is grown organically, unfortunately I'm not convinced with the organic alternative of entomopathogenic fungus treatment for Palm trees (*Metarhizium anisopliae* or *Beauveria bassiana*)

I use a combination of two insecticides and a copper based fungicide. One insecticide kills on contact and one works systemically. I understand you can also add Aceite de Verano which helps 'stick' the treatment to the plant.

Since the end of 2015, it is not possible to purchase the strong insecticides necessary without a license. They are strong chemicals and treatment should be carried out by a professional gardener/tree surgeon, not a handy man!

#### STEP 3 - THE TREATMENT

Treat once a month without fail (keep a calendar!)

In a 15l back-pack sprayer (without the spray attachment)

- 15l water
- Insecticides:
  - 15ml IMIDACLOPRID 20%
  - 30ml CLORPIRIFOS 48%
- Prevent fungus:
  - 30g COPPER SULFATE

The contents should be applied directly to the crown of the tree, drenching the area at the base of the fronds and so it runs down the trunk.

Unless using a remote pressurized machine, when treating the palm suitable clothing covering all exposed skin and a mask should be worn. (one with valves and filters - not a dust mask!)

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