



Tree Grading Cue Card

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Florida Chapter ISA & UF/IFAS

1 Choose appropriate tree matrix type.

Type 1 – Tall and Wide form

e.g. black-olive, live oak, mahogany, southern magnolia

Type 2 – Tall and Narrow form

e.g. bald-cypress, East Palatka holly, Japanese blueberry, pine

Type 3 – Short/Wide and Multi-trunk form

e.g. silver buttonwood, tabebuia, yaupon holly, crape-myrtle

Refer to the matrix tables to determine tree height, crown diameter and root ball or container size requirements.

Measure the caliper.

Trunk caliper is measured 6 inches from the ground on trees up to and including 4-inches in caliper, and 12 inches above the ground for larger trees. Diameter at breast height (DBH) is not an appropriate measurement for nursery trees.

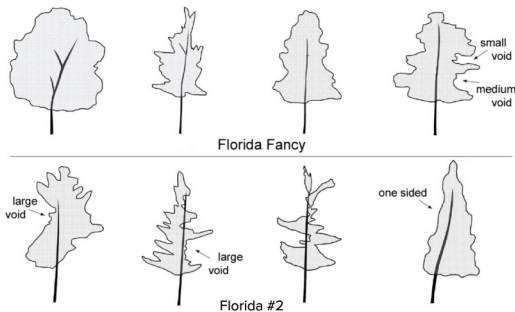
Note: For multi-trunk, small-maturing trees, use container size or root ball diameter in place of caliper. For all other trees measure the caliper.

2 Grade the tree according to trunk structure.

Small-maturing trees skip Step 2.



3 Grade the tree according to crown uniformity.



Not all shapes and forms are represented above. The images include a sample of what would be considered acceptable for Florida Fancy (FF) or Florida #2 (FL#2) of other shapes and forms.

Note: For crown uniformity there is no Florida #1 or Cull grade.

4 Record the lowest grade determined in Steps 2 and 3.

5 Record the grade after making the following deductions:

If one of the following statements is true, reduce the grade determined in Step 4 by one. If two or more are true, reduce the grade by two.

Reference tree caliper and appropriate matrix for 5a, 5b, and 5d.

For multi-trunk small maturing trees, use container size or root ball diameter (not caliper) for 5b and skip 5a and 5d.

- a)** Tree does not meet height requirement.
- b)** Crown does not meet diameter requirement.
- c)** Root ball is not secure enough to successfully transplant.
- d)** Root ball or container is undersized. If two or more sizes undersized, reduce grade by two.
- e)** Tree has a trunk caliper larger than two inches and requires a stake to hold the trunk erect. For multi-trunk trees, this applies to each trunk individually.

6 Record the grade after making the following deductions:

If two of the following statements are true, reduce the grade determined in Step 5 by one. If three or more of the statements are true, reduce the grade by two. It takes only one true statement to reduce FF to FL #1.

- a)** Flush cuts were made when pruning branches from the trunk.
- b)** Branch stubs were left beyond the collar.
- c)** Open trunk wounds are evident.
- d)** More than 10% of the crown exhibits necrosis, chlorosis, pest damage, disease, or tip dieback.
- e)** The crown is thin and sparsely foliated (allow for harvesting/time of year).
- f)** There is included bark between the trunk and a major lateral branch or between main trunks.

7 The tree is a Cull if one of the following statements is true:

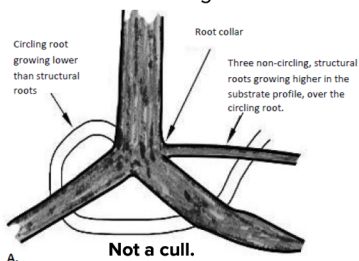
- a)** The top-most root emerges from root collar more than two inches below the root ball surface.

Note: Soil, substrate and/or roots can be removed from the top 1/3 of the root ball to conform to this depth requirement.

- b)** All three of the following are true: 1. One or more roots greater than 1/10 the trunk caliper 2. Circle more than 1/3 of the trunk 3. Is in the top 1/4 of the root ball.

Note: Circling roots less than 1/3 of the trunk caliper can be cut at the point where it begins to circle and the tree would no longer be a Cull.

The presence of a circling root(s) is not a downgrade when three or more non-circling, structural roots are growing higher in the substrate profile over the circling root.



To download the complete Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants 2022 document visit: www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry



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