

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR HARVESTING SAW PALMETTO IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

- ✔ The State of Florida classifies saw palmetto as a commercially exploited plant and therefore requires a permit to be obtained prior to beginning any harvest. You can download the permit application on the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website at www.FDACS.gov/SawPalmettoBerry. Permits will not be issued for incomplete and/or unsigned applications.
- ✔ Permit applications may be submitted anytime throughout the year.
- ✔ A single permit may be used by multiple harvesters if they are working for a single agency provided all collectors' names are on the permit.
- ✔ Saw palmetto may not be harvested on state owned lands in Florida (unless permission is granted by the proper authority).
- ✔ Written permission is required to harvest on any private property. Permit applications require landowner information and signature for each property where harvest will take place. A Permission Letter for Harvesting form must be used for each property.
- ✔ A FL permit is not required for berries harvested out of state and then brought into the state, however as with any agricultural good, you will need to have a bill of lading or similar document to show where the berries were harvested.
- ✔ The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services serves as the state agency managing permits for saw palmetto berry harvest. They can be reached at 1-888-397-1517 or at:

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Plant Industry
The Doyle Conner Building
1911 SW 34 St.
Gainesville, FL 32608
(888) 397-1517



The information here is believed to be accurate but does not replace the actual laws that govern the harvest and sale of saw palmetto. Make sure you know and follow all state laws and regulations where you harvest saw palmetto.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST

When harvesting saw palmetto fruit, make sure you follow all of these good stewardship practices:

- ✔ Get permission to harvest from the landowner.
- ✔ Get a permit from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- ✔ Harvest: should take place when at least 60% of the fruits are yellow/orange/black.
- ✔ Harvest only ripe fruit that is yellow, orange or black in color.
- ✔ Wait until buying stations post a harvest date.
- ✔ Harvest season generally runs from August to November.

Information provided by:



(301) 588-1171 • ahpa@ahpa.org

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GOOD STEWARDSHIP HARVESTING

of

SAW PALMETTO BERRIES (*Serenoa repens*)

Saw palmetto is a long-lived perennial plant in the palm family (Arecaceae) which is native to the Southeastern United States. It occurs as a major understory plant on pine flatwoods, scrubby flatwoods, and in sand pine scrub. Saw palmetto plants are colonial; often forming dense stands in the understory. The species currently grows in every county in Florida, with its range extending across GA, and southern parts of SC, AL, MS, and LA. Saw palmetto is low-growing with palmately lobed fan shaped leaves that are yellow-green, green, or silvery green and 1–2 m in length, with leaflets 50–100 cm long. Saw palmetto produces creamy white flowers in dense compound panicles up to 60 cm long in spring and 4-5mm green colored fruits are produced in the summer, ripening to yellow and orange and then to a brownish or reddish black in late summer and early fall.

Though the correct botanical term for the saw palmetto fruit is a drupe, it is referred to as a berry throughout the herbal trade so we will refer to it as such in this brochure. Green berries are considered unripe while yellow, orange, and black berries are considered ripe.

Saw palmetto berries have been traded continuously in international commerce for at least the last 50 years. The biggest markets for products made from the ripe fruit are in the U.S. and annual production is currently estimated to be an average of 5,000 dried U.S. tons.

While a small portion of the annual harvest occurs in Georgia, the majority of saw palmetto fruit is collected from wild plants growing in the State of Florida.

The harvest practices presented in this brochure are provided to inform harvesters of wild saw palmetto berries on best collection practices in order to act as stewards of the plant and its habitat.



STEWARDSHIP HARVESTING OF SAW PALMETTO

DO NOT HARVEST



Image of unripe (top, green) and ripe (bottom, black and orange) berries. Unripe green berries should not be harvested.

HARVEST



Harvest should take place only on plants where at least 60% of the fruit is visibly ripe with a color of yellow, orange or black. It is advised only to harvest ripe berries.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF HARVEST PRACTICES THAT MUST BE FOLLOWED FOR A COLLECTOR TO BE A SAW PALMETTO STEWARD

- ✔ Harvest should take place only on plants where at least 60% of the fruit is ripe with a color of yellow, orange or black.
- ✔ Leave all green berries on the plant.
- ✔ While there is no official harvest season for saw palmetto berries, generally speaking the harvest season is from August through November. Exact timing depends on factors including local environment, rainfall and local weather conditions, market demand, etc. Check with your buyer before you harvest and do not harvest in extreme heat conditions as this is not safe for harvesters.
- ✔ Note: the green berries do not contain desired levels of the medicinally active compound required to make quality saw palmetto extracts and supplements. It is advised to only harvest ripe berries.
- ✔ Wait until buying stations post a harvest date before you begin harvesting berries.
- ✔ Do not harvest 100% of ripe berries in a given harvest location. Saw palmetto berries are an important food source for local native wildlife. Ensure that an adequate amount of ripe berries are left for wildlife.

FLORIDA HARVESTING PERMIT

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Plant Industry
REQUEST FOR PERMIT TO HARVEST ENDANGERED OR COMMERCIALY EXPLOITED PLANTS OR PLANT PARTS

Form FD-1000 (Rev. 10/14/2014)

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

| Area Number | Acres | County | Additional Conditions |
|-------------|-------|--------|-----------------------|
| | | | |

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of applicant or permittee: _____
 Mailing address: _____
 Email address: _____
 Phone: _____
 Name of property owner(s) to be harvested: _____

| Year & County Name | Plant Part | Quantity or number of plants to be harvested | Permit Fee (\$) | Harvest Date | Harvest |
|--------------------|------------|--|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | | | | | |

Remember to check whether you need a permit for the plants you wish to harvest on page 3.
 The permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance and is not transferable.
 The permit is not valid for the collection of plants for commercial purposes, including the collection of plants for medicinal purposes.
 The permit is not valid for the collection of plants for the purpose of selling, gifting, or donating to any other person, organization, or institution.
 The permit is not valid for the collection of plants for the purpose of growing or propagating plants.
 Section 19, Florida Statutes, Chapter 627, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, requires the applicant to provide a permit for the harvest of any plant.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date: _____

The State of Florida considers saw palmetto a commercially exploited plant and requires a permit before harvesting in the state.

PERMIT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- ✔ Pages one and two of the application form must be completed in full.
- ✔ Include your signature and date on page one.
- ✔ Include the permission letter or letters from the property owner(s) with their signature and date on page two. You must submit permission letters for all properties from which you plan to harvest.
- ✔ Page three of the form is not required and is used only if you are collecting additional plants or plant parts unrelated to saw palmetto berries.
- ✔ Permits will not be issued for incomplete applications.
- ✔ You may either mail in a hard copy of your Permit Application or you may email it to DPISPB@FDACS.gov as a scanned PDF or JPG file.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ✔ If approved, your permit will be sent to you by email or postal mail if you did not provide an email address in the application.
- ✔ The Permit Application should be submitted anytime throughout the year.
- ✔ There is no cost associated with the permit.
- ✔ You may not harvest until you obtain a permit.
- ✔ The permit is valid for one year from the date it was issued.
- ✔ Permits may not be renewed so a permit application should be submitted and new permit obtained each year you plan to harvest.
- ✔ Permit applications must be submitted even if you are harvesting on your own property.