The Office of Agriculture of the Consell de Formentera reminds islanders that the pruning of plants like palm trees which are susceptible to infestation by red palm weevils should be done in January and February. In recent years the lowest average temperatures have occurred during these months, and pruning at this time can curb the weevil's proliferation.

Josep Marí, rural affairs councillor, praised Formentera residents for their collaboration in this regard in recent years. In 2013 the first local palm trees were destroyed due to the red palm weevil. The peak came in 2015, when 117 affected palm trees were destroyed. "We've seen a downward trend since then", explained Marí. "In 2022 only four palm trees were destroyed, and this confirms that the pest's numbers are in decline."

Office of Agriculture authorisation

Before pruning palm trees, islanders should obtain permission from the Office of Agriculture (located in Centre Antoni Tur "Gabrielet"; open 9.00am to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday). Requests can also be fielded through the Virtual Citizen Information Office (*Oficina Virtual d'Atenció a la Ciudadania, OVAC*). These measures are designed to safeguard palm trees and ensure that waste at the island's transfer plant can be managed properly (islanders who have received authorisation may dispose of waste at the transfer plant free of charge).

When pruning plants that are susceptible to weevil infestation, prune dry leaves only. If green leaves must be removed, cuts should be small and pruning mastic or a phytosanitary product should be applied. Cuts should be clean, not ragged. Avoid brushing stipes or trunks of vulnerable plants. Shaving or shaping should only be done when necessary, not for ornamental purposes, and should be followed immediately by phytosanitary treatment. If red palm weevils are detected during pruning, inform the Office of Agriculture so the official action protocol can be implemented.

The red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*), a beetle that attacks palm trees, reduces and even stops its biological activity during cold temperatures.

12 January 2023
Communications Office
Consell de Formentera