

It's Sunday in the yard with Jeff

A



couple of months ago, I replanted several bird's nest ferns into my garden. They had been growing in large containers that they'd outgrown and needed to be replanted in a better location, where they could reach their full potential. This was done after I had removed a couple of palms that were getting too tall. I could use the now plentiful short pieces of cut palm trunk to build planters on the ground.

The palms that I had removed were species that can be prone to failing in a windstorm since they tend to have shallower root systems and evolved in a part of the world that never got hurricanes or typhoons.

I hired an experienced, certified arborist to climb the trunks and cut down the palms in pieces, i.e., manageable sections that I could use in the garden. The most convenient day for me to have this task accomplished is Sunday since I work the other days during the week. I was concerned for my neighbors whom I didn't want to experience the blast of loud noise from a chainsaw into their homes, although there are neighbors and nearby businesses that seem to produce hours' worth of leaf blower noise every day of the week, even on Sundays.

This arborist had recently purchased a battery-operated electric chainsaw. Thinking back on the electrically powered chainsaws that I had used in the past, I had my doubts about the electric saw's ability to chew through a thick fibrous palm trunk. I was much surprised! I was also surprised at how long the battery lasted before it needed to be switched out (not at all). The

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sharp blade (chain) cut through the trunks just as well as a gasoline-powered saw, but without the noise!

What a great tool for arborists. Now, obviously these saws and the batteries need to be improved and definitely do not replace the larger and more powerful gasoline-operated chainsaws, but they will improve. Imagine not having to transport cans of gasoline in your vehicle or store containers of gasoline on your property to power your equipment.

Having managed large landscapes in the past, I would definitely purchase a couple of these electrical chainsaws with extra batteries.

And the noise level is lowered dramatically!

In my travels I come across many contractors, not just arborists, who have awful safety practices. This includes workers or contractors performing jobs for municipalities who apparently are not mandated or required to follow safety procedures and practices. Don't you want contractors working on your property to work in a safe manner? Don't you want the arborist or landscaper working on your property to stop spilling gasoline on your grass, on your expensive paver driveway, or in your landscape?

And don't you want to lower the noise level from tree or landscape operations? Wow, imagine getting rid of the noise from chainsaws and all of the leaf blowers we're subjected to every day of the week, including Sunday.

So the photo that accompanies this article is of a newly replanted *Asplenium nidus*, or bird's nest ferns putting out a new set of leaves. They are called "fiddleheads" since the ends of the new leaves look like the ends of a fiddle as they unfurl. The stack of cut palm trunks has raised the central part of the fern about three feet off the ground. The larger spaces between the root ball and the trunks are loosely packed with a rough woody mulch. You don't need to fill every space. The roots of the fern will envelop this woody mass to benefit from the decomposing wood. All I have to do is irrigate about once a week. No fertilizer needed.

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Over the years I have recycled and used cut logs of different tree and palm species as “nurse logs” to cultivate many species of plants that typically grow as epiphytes. Many species of orchids, bromeliads, ferns, and even gingers grow on the trunks of trees and palms in the tropics and will benefit when planted onto cut tree and palm trunks in your garden.

Knowing that the fronds of this fern species can get up to seven or eight feet long, I planted the center of the fern about ten feet from the adjacent paver path so I won't have to deal with fronds blocking the pathway in the future. Once these new fronds lay down onto the preceding set of leaves, the fern will start to look “fuller” and more symmetrical.

I expect this bird's nest fern to send out about five or six sets of new “fiddleheads” this year. It will become a striking specimen in my garden.

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