

# Tree Grading Cue Card

## 2015 Edition

provided by RPG, ACT, Florida Chapter ISA & UF/IFAS

### 1 Choose appropriate tree matrix type.

Type 1 – tall and wide form

ex. black-olive, live oak, mahogany, southern magnolia

Type 2 – tall and narrow form

ex. bald-cypress, East Palatka holly, Japanese blueberry, pine

Type 3 – short/wide and multi-trunked form

ex. silver buttonwood, tabebuia, yaupon holly, crape-myrtle

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

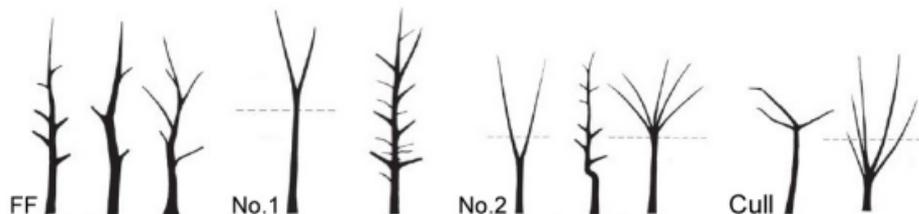
a) For multi-trunked small maturing trees measure the container or root ball size.

b) For all other trees measure the caliper.

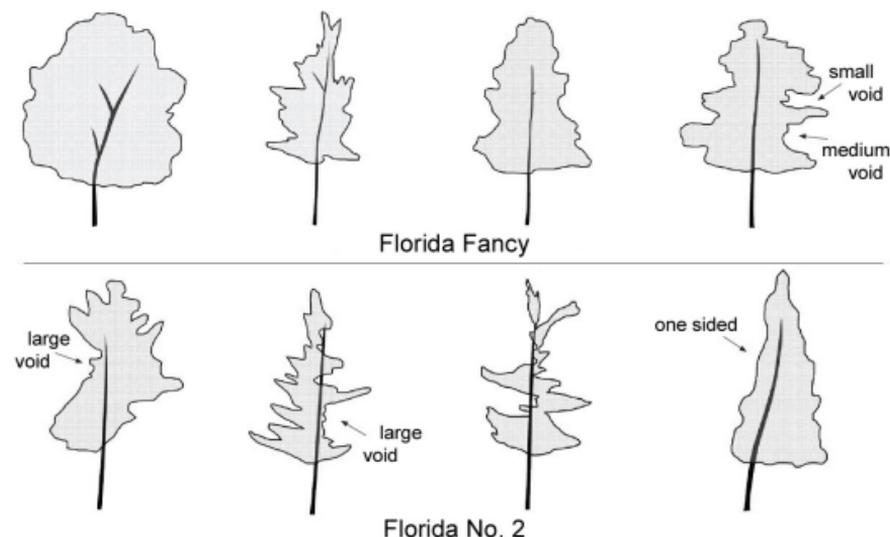
*Trunk caliper is measured 6 inches above the ground on trees up to and including 4 inches in caliper, and 12 inches above the ground for larger trees. Diameter at breast height (DBH) is not considered an appropriate measurement for nursery trees.*

### 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 here; however, these images represent what would be acceptable for Florida Fancy or Florida No. 2 of other shapes and forms. Note: For crown uniformity there is no Florida No. 1 or Cull grade.*

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

**5 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-trunked 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, reduce grade by two.
- e) Tree with a trunk caliper larger than two inches requires a stake to hold the trunk erect. For multi-trunked trees, this applies to each trunk individually.

**6 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 Florida Fancy to Florida No. 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 or damage from pests, diseases or tip dieback.
- e) The crown is thin and sparsely foliated (allow for harvesting/ time of year).
- f) Included bark between the trunk and a major lateral branch or between main trunks.
- g) Trunks and/or major branches are touching.

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

- a) Top-most structural root emerges from trunk more than two inches below the top of the root ball surface. Soil, substrate and/or roots can be removed from the top 1/3 of the root ball to conform to this depth requirement.
- b) One or more roots greater than 1/10 the trunk caliper, circle more than 1/3 of trunk in the top 1/2 of the root ball. Circling roots less than 1/3 the trunk diameter can be cut at the point just inside where they begin to circle, following cutting, the tree is no longer a Cull.

**Grading notes**

- A dogleg is a significant S-shaped deformation in the trunk below the crown. If there is a dogleg in the clear trunk portion, the tree is graded Florida No. 2. If the dogleg is in the crown portion of the tree, the tree is not downgraded. The distance 'A' can be no more than the trunk diameter.
- Grades and Standards do not apply to specialty trees like braided stems, poodles, espalier, topiary and bonsai.
- To download the complete G&S document visit <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry>



*This tree grading cue card provided to you courtesy of Roots Plus Growers, Association of Certified Container Tree Growers, the Florida Chapter ISA & The University of Florida IFAS Extension*