

Owners of palm trees obliged to control red weevils

The Government passes a decree demanding new outbreaks be identified

Palm trees at risk must be identified and treatments applied.

Last Friday, local Government passed a decree giving public importance to the fight against red palm weevil infestations. This decree not only combines Autonomous Community regulations with newly-framed community and state law but also dictates mandatory sanitary measures for producers, traders and importers of plants or palm trees at risk. In addition, the territory as a whole is taken into account where combatting the infestation is concerned.

Producers, traders and importers of plants - whether individuals or companies - must be listed in the official register. They must monitor plantations of palms identified as at risk; ensure proper plant health; apply treatments and quarantine or isolate plants. They will have other responsibilities, such as reporting new symptoms or outbreaks and allowing personnel, appointed by sanitary authorities and charged with inspecting plants, free access to installations and endangered plant nurseries. Sanitary authorities must also publish regular updated lists of boroughs included in affected areas and of any that can be excluded. The General Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock must publish an overview of this information, next to the web page that provides information about the most effective means of controlling red palm weevils, and must coordinate work needed to increase knowledge about this infestation and how to contend with it.

This was announced by Government spokesman, Marc Pons, at a press conference where he was accompanied by the Environment Minister, Vicenç Vidal.

Current scientific thinking on the biology, propagation, spread and control of this beetle suggests that plans to protect plants using plant health tools available for prevention and cure "can enable the preservation of heritage landscape and prevent losses caused by strategies based exclusively on removing specimens ravaged by this pest."