

Naples Reserve

UPDATED INFORMATION ON Shrub Trimming

Clusia (Pitch Apple) & Seagrape Trimming

BrightView Tree has been working through the property to evaluate the condition of the Clusia hedges/Seagrapes and, in some areas, make necessary heavier cuts to restore their structure and long-term health. This affects those in the common areas only. Over time, certain sections have become excessively top-heavy, creating structural concerns and increasing the potential for limbs or sections of the hedge to fail during periods of high winds. Upcoming storms or hurricanes may by damage or weaken portions of the plants. While these cuts are necessary, residents may notice that some areas of the hedge appear uneven or more heavily trimmed than others in the short term.

As the Clusia and Seagrape respond and begin to put on new growth, our regular maintenance crews will continue to work these areas during their normal trimming cycles. This will allow us to gradually shape and balance the hedges while encouraging stronger, more uniform growth. Our goal is not simply to make the hedges look uniform immediately, but to address the underlying structural issues and establish healthier, more manageable hedges that can be maintained consistently over time. We understand that this process can be unsightly for the plant material. We appreciate everyone's patience as these areas recover and the hedge lines are brought back into a more balanced appearance.

In some locations, residents may notice that up to three feet of growth has been removed from the core hedge portions of the Clusia/Seagrapes. Not just the shoots. While this may appear significant initially, Clusia is a very resilient plant that responds well to rejuvenation pruning and will quickly begin producing new growth from existing branches. These corrective cuts are intended to reduce excess weight, improve structural integrity, and encourage a fuller, healthier hedge over the long term. We are already seeing positive results in the Seagrape areas that were previously cut back, with new growth emerging and many sections beginning to fill in and rebound. As both the Clusia and Seagrape continue their recovery, their appearance will steadily improve, resulting in stronger, healthier plant material that is better able to withstand future weather events and ongoing maintenance practices.



Why Periodic Pruning of Clusia and Seagrape Matters

South Florida landscapes often feature **Clusia** (*Clusia rosea*) and **Seagrape** (*Coccoloba uvifera*) because of their durability, salt tolerance, and attractive appearance. While these plants are valued for privacy screens and coastal aesthetics, periodic pruning and cut backs are essential to maintain plant health, safety, and long-term performance.

Clusia: Managing Growth and Structure

Clusia, commonly known as Pitch Apple, is a fast-growing evergreen that can reach **25 to 30 feet in height and spread 15 to 25 feet wide** if left unmanaged. Although many communities install Clusia as a hedge, the plant naturally develops into a large tree-like form. According to **UF/IFAS Extension**, planting locations should account for its mature size, as maintaining Clusia as a low hedge requires ongoing pruning and maintenance. Regular pruning and cut backs help control height and width, improves sightlines, prevents encroachment on sidewalks and structures, and promotes a denser, healthier hedge.

Source: University of Florida IFAS Extension, ENH331 "Clusia rosea: Pitch Apple." [\[ask.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu), [\[blogs.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu)

Seagrapes: Preserving a Coastal Resource

Seagrape is one of South Florida's most recognizable native coastal plants. It can be maintained as either a shrub or a tree and may grow **35 to 50 feet tall** when mature. Beyond its ornamental value, seagrape plays an important ecological role by helping stabilize sand dunes, reducing erosion, and providing habitat and food sources for wildlife.

UF/IFAS notes that seagrapes require relatively little maintenance beyond periodic pruning to maintain their desired shape. However, because of their environmental importance, seagrapes growing in coastal dune systems are protected under Florida law. Excessive pruning or damage to seagrapes in these sensitive coastal areas may require permits and can be subject to regulatory oversight.

Sources: UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions and Florida Department of Environmental Protection coastal vegetation guidelines. [\[gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu), [\[blogs.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu), [\[suncoasteg.com\]](https://suncoasteg.com)

Best Practices for Landscape Pruning

Professional pruning focuses on maintaining the natural form of the plant while encouraging healthy growth. Industry standards referenced by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection recommend removal of stems, branches, and foliage. Proper pruning:

- Improves visibility and safety around roadways and sidewalks.
- Encourages healthy branching and canopy structure.
- Reduces storm-related breakage risks.
- Maintains desired hedge dimensions and appearance.
- Promotes airflow and sunlight penetration within the plant canopy.

Sources: Florida Department of Environmental Protection Sea Grape Trimming Guidelines and UF/IFAS pruning resources. [\[suncoasteg.com\]](https://suncoasteg.com), [\[gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu), [\[hos.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://hos.ifas.ufl.edu), [\[hos.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://hos.ifas.ufl.edu)



References

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University of Florida IFAS Gardening Solutions, *Seagrape* (*Coccoloba uvifera*). [\[gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)

University of Florida IFAS Extension, *Exploring Florida's Natives: Seagrape*. [\[blogs.ifas.ufl.edu\]](https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu)

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, *Sea Grape Trimming Guidelines*. [\[suncoasteg.com\]](https://suncoasteg.com)