

EXAMPLE I

Grade a container-grown live oak (shown below) with a 3" diameter trunk, 6" above the ground. The tree is 14' tall with a 66" branch spread. The crown is full and the foliage is normal-sized and dark green. The root ball measures 34" in diameter and is tightly bound in wire. The bark is all intact and there are no flush cuts evident.

Step 1. Look inside the crown of the tree at the trunk form. Grade the tree according to the drawings and captions in Fig. 1 (page 10). Trees with one dominant trunk are graded Florida Fancy. Those with double or multiple trunks are given a lesser grade depending on the extent of the defect.

Grade: Florida #2

The drawings and description of a Florida #2 in Fig. 1 most closely match the condition of the example tree. That is, the trunk divides into 2 equal-sized trunks in the bottom ½ of the tree. (This is difficult to see in this photograph. Look carefully at the bottom of the canopy.)



Quercus virginiana -live oak
Florida #2

Step 2. Check branch arrangement. Grade the tree according to the drawings and captions in Fig. 2 (page 11.) Trees with optimum branch arrangement are graded as Florida Fancy. Those with branch arrangement defects are

given a lesser grade according to the extent of the defects.

Grade: Florida Fancy

Branches are well-spaced along the trunk of the example tree and none are growing in the vertical position.

Step 3. Choose the appropriate tree matrix type based on the natural form of the tree as it should appear in the nursery (see Index of Trees on pages 37-44 for guidance).

Appropriate matrix type: Matrix 1, Spreading and round trees. (The Index of Trees indicates Matrix 1 is appropriate for live oak.)

Step 4. Measure the caliper of the trunk.

Caliper: 3"

The caliper of the example tree is 3".

Step 5. Locate the caliper of the tree in the left column of the appropriate matrix chart chosen in Step 3. Grade the tree according to the minimum crown spread diameter (see Fig. 5 on page 45). A tree must have a spread equal to or larger than the minimum for the grade.

Grade: Florida Fancy

Find the three numbers in Matrix 1 indicating minimum crown spread diameter for the 3" caliper example tree. The tree is a Florida Fancy because the crown spread is 66".

Step 6. Grade the tree according to structural uniformity (see Fig. 3 on page 12).

Grade: Florida Fancy

The example tree has a nearly uniform crown as shown in Fig. 3.

Step 7. What is the lowest grade determined in steps 1, 2, 5 and 6?

Grade: Florida #2

The grade determined in Step 1 = Florida #2, in Step 2 = Florida Fancy, in Step 5 = Florida Fancy and in Step 6 = Florida Fancy.

Step 8. If any of the following statements are true, reduce the grade determined in Step 7 by one.

T F

- a) The tree requires a stake to hold it erect.
- b) The root ball or container is undersized (consult any matrix).
- c) The root ball is not secured tightly with pins, twine or wire-
- d) Tree is excessively root-bound.
- e) There is evidence that one or more large roots (greater than 1/5 the diameter of the trunk) were growing out of the container or grow bag (see Fig. 9 on page 47).
- f) The crown is thin and sparsely foliated.
- g) More than 5% of branches have tip die-back.

Grade: Florida #2

The grade determined in Step 7 is not reduced because all statements in Step 8 are false.

Step 9. If two of the following statements (a-j) are true, reduce the grade determined in Step 8 by one. If more than two of the statements (a-j) are true, reduce the grade by two. **Note:** It takes only one true statement to reduce a Florida Fancy to a Florida #1. Three true statements are required to reduce a Florida Fancy to a Florida #2.

T F

- a) Tree height (see Fig. 11 on page 47) is shorter than the minimum height and taller than the maximum height specified in the appropriate matrix chart. Plants such as wax privet and other multistemmed specialty plants should not be downgraded if shorter than the minimum height.

T F

- b) Flush cuts were made when pruning branches from the trunk (see Fig. 4 on page 13).
- c) Branch stubs are left beyond the branch collar (see Fig. 4 on page 13). A branch stub can be removed and not reduce the grade.
- d) Open trunk wounds or other bark injury is evident. (Open trunk wounds must be less than 10% of the trunk circumference and less than 2 inches tall on the Florida #1 trees.)
- e) Graft unions are not complete.
- f) The bottom 40% of the tree has no branches.
- g) More than 5% of the leaves are chlorotic, or more than 5% of the canopy exhibits damage from pests and diseases. **Note:** A Florida #1 cannot have more than 10% of the leaves chlorotic or more than 10% of the canopy damaged from pests or diseases.
- h) Most leaves are smaller than normal.
- i) There is bark included between trunk and a major lateral branch or between main trunks (see Fig. 6 on page 45).
- j) Trunks and/ or major branches are touching.

Step 10. The tree is a Cull if it has a root greater than 1/10 the diameter of the trunk circling around more than 1/3 of the trunk (see Fig. 8 on page 46). The tree has no such circling roots, so this step does not apply.

Final Grade: Florida #2

The grade determined in Step 8 is Florida #2. None of the statements in Steps 9 and 10 are true, so the grade remains Florida #2.

Grade a wax privet 4 feet tall with a 6-foot crown spread grown in a 15-gallon container (shown below). There is a root circling around 1/5 the trunk just below the surface of the media 2 inches from the trunk. The tree stands erect by itself and is well-established in the container. There is chlorosis on 4% or 5% of the foliage, and the tree was topped in the nursery to create a denser crown. Most leaves are smaller than normal. There is bark included between the trunk and several major branches, but no trunks or major branches are touching one another.

Skip Steps 1, 2 and 4 because you are grading a multistemmed small-maturing tree.

EXAMPLE 2

Step 3. Choose the appropriate tree matrix type based on the natural form of the tree as it appears in the nursery (see Index of Trees on pages 37-44 for guidance).

Appropriate tree matrix type: Matrix 4, vase shaped. (The Index of Trees indicates Matrix 4 is appropriate for wax privet.)

Step 5. Locate the caliper of the tree in the first column of the appropriate matrix type chosen in Step 3. (For multistemmed crape myrtle, cattley guava, wax privet, wax myrtle or other similar trees of small stature, find the container size or root ball diameter of the plant you are grading, and ignore the caliper.) Grade the tree according to the minimum crown spread diameter (see Fig. 5 on page 45). A tree must have a spread equal to or larger than the minimum for that grade.

Grade: Florida Fancy

Find the three numbers in Matrix 4 indicating minimum crown spread diameter for a 15-gallon tree. The tree is Florida Fancy because the crown spread diameter is 6 feet, above the 36-inch minimum for Florida Fancy.

Step 6. Grade the tree according to structural uniformity (see Fig. 3 on page 12).

Grade: Florida #1

The example tree has a portion of the crown missing and most closely matches the Florida #1 drawing in Figure 3.

Step 7. What is the lowest grade determined in Steps 1, 2, 5 and 6?

Grade: Florida #1

Steps 1 and 2 were skipped because the tree you are grading is a small, multi-stemmed tree, the grade determined in Step 5 was Florida Fancy, and the grade determined in Step 6 was Florida #1. The lowest grade is Florida #1.

Step 8. If any of the following are true, reduce the grade determined in Step 7 by one.

T F

- a) The tree requires a stake to hold it erect.
- b) The root ball or container is undersized (consult any tree matrix).
- c) The root ball is not secured tightly with pins, twine or wire.
- d) The tree is excessively root bound.



Ligustrum japonicum -wax privet
Florida#1

T F

- e) There is evidence that one or more large roots (greater than 115 the diameter of the trunk) were growing out of the container or grow bag (see Fig. 9 on page 47).
- f) The crown is thin and sparsely foliated.
- g) More than 5% of branches have tip die-back.

Grade: Florida #1

There is no reason to reduce the grade from Step 7 since none of the above are true.

Step 9. If two of the following are true, reduce the grade determined in Step 8 by one. If more than two of statements a-j are true, reduce the grade by two. **Note:** It takes only one true statement to reduce a Florida Fancy to a Florida #1. Three true statements are required to reduce a Florida Fancy to a Florida #2.

T F

- a) Tree height (see Fig. 11 on page 47) is shorter than the minimum height and taller than the maximum height specified in the appropriate matrix chart. Plants such as wax privet and other small multistemmed specialty plants should not be downgraded if they are shorter than the minimum height.
- b) Flush cuts were made when pruning branches from the trunk (see Fig. 4 on page 13).
- c) Branch stubs are left beyond the branch collar (can remove a branch stub and not reduce the grade provided the stub is less than 2 inches long).

T F

- d) Open trunk wounds or other bark injury is evident. (Open trunk wounds must be less than 10% of the trunk circumference and less than 2 inches tall on Florida #1 trees.)
- e) Graft unions are not complete.
- f) The bottom 40% of the tree has no branches.
- g) More than 5% of the leaves are chlorotic; or more than 5% of the canopy exhibits damage from pests and diseases. **Note:** A Florida #1 cannot have more than 10% of the leaves chlorotic or more than 10% of the canopy damaged from pests or diseases.
- h) Most leaves are smaller than normal.
- i) There is bark included between trunk and a major lateral branch or between main trunks (see Fig. 7 on page 46).
- j) Trunks and/ or major branches are touching.

Final Grade: Florida #2

Two of the above statements are true: (h) and (i). Therefore, the tree is downgraded from Step 8 to Florida #2. Two statements need to be true in order to downgrade a Florida #1 to Florida #2.

Step 10. The tree is a Cull if it has a root circling around more than 1/3 of the trunk in the top half of the root ball. There is a circling root but it only circles about 1/5 of the trunk so the grade is not reduced. If the root circled more than 1/3 of the trunk, the tree would be a Cull (see Fig. 8 on page 46).