# **Agave / Century Plants**

The century plant is a slow growing succulent plant that can cause major issues with overhead power lines at the end of its life cycle. At the end of its lifespan it sends up a large stalk that can grow 20-30 feet in a few short weeks.

**While conducting pre-inspection, you should inventory the plant even before stalk emergence.** This will help to provide locations for potential special patrols.

**At first sign of stalk emergence the plant should be flagged for prune regardless of clearance to secondary, primary, or transmission line.** Depending on physical location of plant, the stalk can either encroach compliance requirements or may be growing to the side of the lines and at risk for failure into the lines when it dies.

**Century plants that will potentially break compliance shall be memo pruned, regardless of current clearance to the secondary, primary, or transmission line.**

**Century plants that will potentially contact the secondary, primary, or transmission line before scheduled “group” memo pruning would occur shall be “Same Day/Next Day” memo’d instead.** Consult with your Lead as needed on a case by case basis.

**Century plants that will not break compliance, yet have the potential to grow tall enough to the side of the lines and when it dies, fail and strike the lines, shall be flagged for routine pruning.**

The stalk can be expected to continue to put on vertical growth until the flowers on stalk branches bloom. As the plant dies, you will notice a color difference (tan, brown) in stalk and rosette. Once pruned safe from the power lines, the tree id can be removed from the system the next cycle by opening the record and updating the condition to “deleted.” If there are more plants in the area, add a new icon to the system so these can be queried if necessary and as a heads up for the next inspector.

  

Stalk Emerging 4/5/05 Significant growth 4/25/05 Out of compliance 5/5/05

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***http://www.hear.org/pier/images/starr_031210_0229_furcraea_foetida.jpg***  ***Furcraea foetida*** | ***http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_JdLUvahdd4w/TD-X61GRRHI/AAAAAAAAAOM/aEdjlPlydts/s1600/IMG_0564.JPG***  ***Furcraea macdougalii*** |
| http://scienceblogs.com/zooillogix/wp-content/blogs.dir/253/files/2012/04/i-fcf863a3ec28df8a0612e9b08ede5331-Century%20Plant3.jpg | ***http://www.calflora.net/floraofbermuda/images/agave_americana_marginataB.jpg*** |
| ***Agave americana*** | |

The Agave attenuata rarely gets tall enough to affect the facilities or warrant prune. In special circumstances where the lines sag significantly or the plants are on a crest of a small hill or slope, the utility consulting forester would consider adding the plant to the inventory. If Agave attenuata are in the system with a clearance of 20 - 30 feet + below the facilities, the consulting utility forester should remove the plant from the system.

Family: Agaveceae

Genus: Agave

Species: attenuata

Agave attenuata: aka: Fox Tail Agave - This Agave does not have dangerous spines like its relatives do. Agave attenuata can grow up to 4 to 5 feet tall by about twice as wide, individual rosettes may reach 4 feet wide atop a stout curving smooth gray stem that rises up to 4 feet tall. The leave structure opens up like a large open green flower. When the plant matures it sends up a 5 to 10 foot vertical flower stalk that becomes curved. Other common names for this Agave are Fox-tail agave, Lion's Tail Agave & Swan's Neck Agave.

