

Safety First!

After an ice storm, safety is the primary consideration in cleaning up debris and removing hazardous ice-damaged limbs. **Look up** and beware of hanging limbs! **Always stay clear of downed power lines or tree limbs entangled in lines;** contact your city and local utility for assistance and to make a report.

Ice loading, or the accumulation of ice on branches and limbs that increases their weight, coupled with high wind, are major causes of tree damage from ice storms. Do not try to remove ice from the tree. It can cause more damage.

For safety, remove trees that have lost more than 50 percent of the crown or sustained damage to more than one-third of the trunk. If oak trees need corrective pruning, be sure to get as much done in the dormant season and before the growing season. Be aware that maples and birches bleed sap in late winter.



Beware of scams!

Watch out for scams and people coming to town immediately after a disaster, going door to door to solicit business. Ask for proof of insurance for personal and property damage. Ask your city for a list of recommended arborists.

Minimizing ice storm damage

Plant appropriate species. Some species are more vulnerable than others due to their form, shape and other characteristics. See the back of this sheet for a list of more resistant species.

Prune as the tree ages. Young trees should be pruned to maintain a single, central leader and strong branching. Ongoing corrective pruning as trees age is important. Trees with included bark (v-shaped branch junctures with bark folding inward), broad or unbalanced crowns, fine branching or dead or diseased branches are more susceptible to ice damage.



Prune for stronger U-shaped branch junctures (L) and remove branches with weak V-shaped, included bark (R).



Do not top trees (blunt-cutting the main limbs of tree tops leaving stubs as shown above) after storms - or ever! Topping causes the new branch growth to be weak, thus increasing the vulnerability of the tree to future storm damage. Topping trees often leads to early mortality.

Monitor trees that have poor form, have sustained weather damage in the past or are diseased. They will be more susceptible to ice and snow damage. Trees in locations where there are "targets" for falling limbs, e.g. close to busy sidewalks, buildings, etc. should be monitored regularly.

Tree assessment after natural disasters

Many factors go into making the decision to cut down a tree. The list below can provide you with some general guidelines. **We still recommend that you seek out the advice of experts including city foresters or certified arborists.**

Things to consider:

- The tree's health prior to the disaster
- The tree's age. Contact an arborist or city forester if it has historical value.
- The tree's suitability to its site
- The potential for future injury (For example, the same area might be prone to flooding again)
- The timing of the natural disaster (during the growing season or when the tree was dormant)
- Species (For example, a damaged ash tree would not be as important to save as a mature oak.)
- Adjacent trees (Is the tree the only one providing benefits in an area vs. a tree growing among other healthy trees?)
- Extent of damage. **In general, remove the tree if more than 50 percent of the crown has been lost, more than 1/3 of the circumference of the trunk damaged, or if the tree leans more than 45 degrees.**
- History of the tree's stressors. Keep in mind that a tree that has been weakened by flooding, strong winds, ice or hail is less vigorous and may be more prone to a secondary insect or disease attack or more negatively affected by an environmental condition such as an unusually cold winter.

Remember, removing a tree unnecessarily that could potentially recover means a large and immediate loss of many tree benefits. If you decide to keep the tree, continue to monitor its health. Sometimes the damage is not visible for several years. **Plan to do periodic reassessments, for example at six months or one year** depending upon available resources.

Finding Certified Arborists

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) lists certified arborists and those with ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification certification in your area:

<http://ww2.champaign.isa-arbor.com/findanarborist/findanarborist.aspx>

Tree species more resistant to ice damage

In addition to local site conditions, be sure to consider the species' hardiness zone when choosing species.

Arborvitae	European larch	Pignut hickory
Baldcypress	Ginkgo	River birch
Bitternut hickory	Hophornbeam (Ironwood)	Shagbark hickory
Black walnut	Horsechestnut	Swamp white oak
Bur oak	Kentucky coffeetree	Sweet gum
Catalpa	Littleleaf and silver linden	Tupelo (black gum)
Crabapple	Norway spruce	White oak
Eastern red cedar	Ohio buckeye	Yellow buckeye

Getting Help



Trees Forever's Recover, Replant, Restore!

- Use our resources. Start with checking out www.treesforever.org/Guides
- Volunteer coordination for clean-up and replanting
- Help build and facilitate a tree committee
- Hold workshops on tree selection, proper tree planting and care, diseases and stressors

Call (800) 369-1269 to find out how Trees Forever's *Recover, Replant and Restore* program can help.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/forestry/urbanforestry

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