

## Safety First!

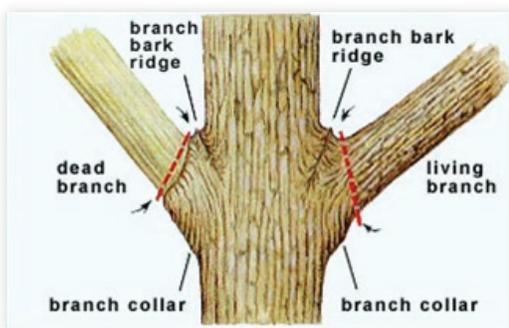
After a windstorm, safe clean-up of tree debris is the first priority. **Always stay clear of downed power lines**; contact your local utility or city for assistance and to make a report.

## Immediate steps

**Watch for scams!** Scammers have been known to prey on victims of natural disasters. Some cities will have tree care businesses or individuals register with the city. You can also ask for proof of insurance.

Remove trees that have lost more than 50 percent of the crown, sustained damage to more than one-third of the trunk or are leaning more than 45 degrees.

Prune broken or damaged branches back to the trunk of the tree cutting just outside the branch collar. Don't leave stubs and don't flush-cut. And **never top trees** (blunt-cutting the main limbs of tree tops leaving stubs). This will weaken the branches and cause future safety concerns.



U.S. Forest Service

*Correct pruning: Prune branches back to the trunk of the tree cutting just beyond the branch collar.*

See Trees Forever's *Tree Care Guide*: [www.treesforever.org/Guides](http://www.treesforever.org/Guides) or the US Forest Service's *Tree Owners Manual*, [www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/treeownersmanual](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/treeownersmanual).



## How to prevent and lessen wind damage

**Manage storm-susceptible trees.** Trees with certain defects, such as included bark (weak, v-shaped branch junctures with bark folding inward), internal decay, cracks, older trees with dead wood, or trees leaning more than 45 degrees, are more susceptible to high winds.

Other factors increasing susceptibility may include trees with broad and/or unbalanced crowns or a canopy with many small twigs and branches. Both can increase total surface area making it easier for wind damage and for snow and ice to accumulate. Trees that have undergone previous weather-related damage should be monitored closely.

**Plant appropriate species.** Some trees, especially fast-growing species, are more susceptible to wind damage. Select species that are more resistant including white and swamp white oaks, Kentucky coffee trees, ginkgo, catalpa, baldcypress, sweet gum, and serviceberry, among others. Research before you buy trees.

## Pruning to ensure stronger trees

**Prune young trees.** Young trees should be pruned to ensure a single, central leader and strong branching patterns. Avoid co-dominant (two or more) leaders such as shown at lower right on a tree that was not pruned correctly when it was young.

## Corrective pruning as the tree grows

is essential. Prune for stronger U-shaped branch angles and remove V-shaped angles and those with included bark (see tree at right). Remove dead and diseased branches and crossing or rubbing branches.



*A weak juncture with included bark (L) can break more easily in windstorms (above).*

# 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 (see right), 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>

## When Replanting, Remember:

- **Know your capacity.** Set your own pace with planting so you can keep up with tree care and maintenance.
- **Plant diverse species** so that long term you won't lose your trees to one pest or disease. Seek help from your city forester, Trees Forever or the Department of Natural Resources to select the best species.
- **Proper tree planting** information can be found at: [www.treesforever.org/Guides](http://www.treesforever.org/Guides).

## Trees Forever's Recover, Replant, Restore!

- Volunteer coordination for clean-up and replanting in your community
- 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](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/forestry/urbanforestry)

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