

# Assessing Damage and...

Right after a wind storm or hurricane, communities and homeowners need to decide what to do with their storm damaged trees. Although damage to trees may seem devastating, some trees can be treated and saved while others need to be removed. Some trees may not require any special treatment and can be left alone. These two possible approaches – removing or restoring – will be discussed in detail to help you make an informed decision about trees in your yard.

## When to Remove a Tree

### The lower trunk is cracked or broken

- This tree has a large broken branch and the crack extends well into the trunk. The crack will not close and the tree poses a risk.
- The remaining trunk is likely to fail.



Photo courtesy of Norm Eesey

### The tree is leaning towards a target

- If a leaning tree is likely to fall on a person, building, power line, roadway or other high value target, it should be removed.
- Leaning trees usually have major roots broken, and are unsafe.



### A large stem has split from the tree

- Notice the dark area at the top of the split – it is a bark inclusion.
- Bark inclusions (see arrow) are weak unions between branches and are very susceptible to breakage.



### The remaining tree structure is highly susceptible to breakage

- Restoration is difficult for this large tree because of its poor initial structure (with multiple trunks, codominant stems and bark inclusions).

### The major roots are severed or broken

- Medium-aged and mature trees should not be righted because major roots are usually severed, making the tree unstable and unsafe.
- Large trees need large roots for structural support.



### Large limbs are broken

- Trees with most of the canopy damaged due to large diameter (greater than 8 inches) branch breakage are more difficult to restore.

## Remember!

**If you remove a tree, plant another one in its place!**

*For a list of wind resistant tree species, see page 12.*

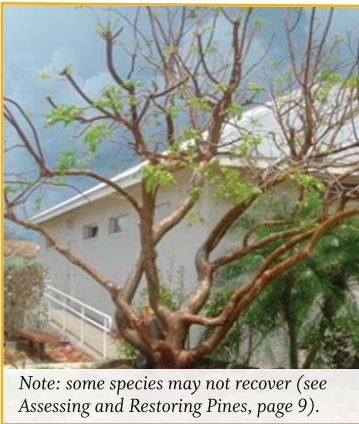
# ...Deciding What to Do

Even after experiencing high winds, many trees can be restored. However, restore only trees that have major limbs, trunk, and roots intact. To be a good candidate for restoration a tree should not have cracks in major limbs or the trunk, decayed wood, or bark inclusions. Roots should not be exposed or lifted out of the soil. Also, make sure the branch and trunk structure were good prior to the storm. See *Preventive Pruning* (page 10) for more on tree structure.

## When to Restore a Tree

### The canopy is defoliated

- Trees that lose their leaves in a hurricane usually are not dead.
- Wait. New foliage may be produced by the following spring.
- Trees and palms flooded with salt water often lose leaves. Irrigate to wash salts through the soil.



*Note: some species may not recover (see Assessing and Restoring Pines, page 9).*

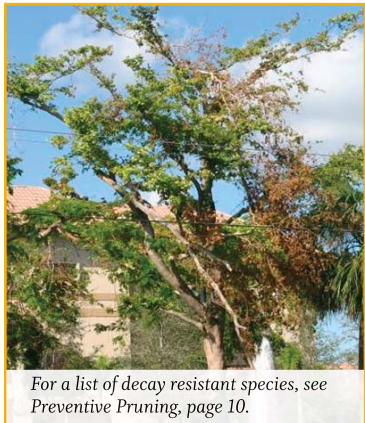


### Small branches are broken or dead

- Trees with small broken branches (less than 4 inches diameter) can easily be pruned and have a good chance of recovering.

### Some major limbs are broken in decay resistant species

- Live oak is one of the many species that are good at resisting decay. Such species can be restored even if there is some major branch breakage.
- Keep in mind that younger trees less than 10 inches in diameter are easier to restore than older trees.



*For a list of decay resistant species, see Preventive Pruning, page 10.*

### Most of the canopy is damaged in decay resistant species

- Trees that resist decay well can lose much of their canopy and still recover after a storm.
- Even with ¾ of their small branches (less than 4 inches diameter) broken or removed by a hurricane, many decay resistant trees can be restored.

### Leaning or fallen trees are small

- Only trees that were recently planted or have a trunk diameter smaller than 4 inches should be stood back up or replanted.
- If you are considering standing up large trees, seek professional advice.



### How to re-establish a small tree

1. Keep roots moist.
2. Excavate the hole to accommodate roots.
3. Cut jagged or torn roots.
4. Pull tree up as straight as possible.
5. Back fill with site soil.
6. Water as if the tree were recently planted: 3 gallons per inch of trunk diameter, 3 times a week.
7. Stake the tree. Adjust stakes regularly and remove when tree is stable.