

When a Storm Strikes

from the National Arbor Day Foundation *Tree City USA*® series of bulletins:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/uf/sotuf/chapter_4/appendix_a/appendixa.htm

1. Assessing the Damage

The first step is to assess the situation and decide what needs to be done - and by whom. Immediately notify police of any wires that are down on *sidewalks or* the street. Stay away, and *keep other people* away! In case of tree damage on your property, notify the phone or electric company of any problems with wires - and do not try to correct the situation *yourself*.

If street trees are the responsibility of the municipality, report damage to the department that handles tree care. Check to see if they will remove the downed branches of privately owned trees if brought to curbside.

For removal of downed trees or repair of damaged ones, decide if you want to do the work or hire someone to do it for you. Tree work can be extremely dangerous and a tree care company should be used especially when:



- a tree is large and requires high climbing or the use of a chain saw.
- the tree is partially down ~for example, leaning on a structure or entangled with another tree).
- wires are involved or structures are endangered.
- major repair of the tree is necessary, such as cabling or bolting a split fork.
- large limbs are split or broken but still attached to the tree.
- you do not have the proper tools, knowledge, or health to do tree work.

2. Selecting a Professional

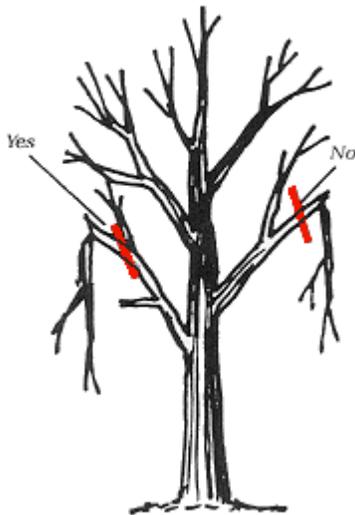
After a storm, it is common in some areas for people to show up at your door offering their services to remove or repair trees. As one urban forester warned, "They seem to come out of the woodwork - people we have never even heard of before." Do not be a victim. Make sure you use only professionals who:

- are part of established businesses in the community or nearby areas, and who are working for the company rather than moonlighting.
- have a listing in the phone book, usually under Tree Service.
- are fully insured for property damage, personal liability and worker compensation.
- ideally, are members of a professional association of arborists.

It is also wise to get more than one estimate when possible. In case of removals, have a clear understanding about who removes the limbs and debris from the property, and whether or not the price includes stump removal and clean-up. Your tree will have value as firewood or chips, either to yourself or if sold to others, and should be considered in the estimate.

Repairing the Damage

How To Prune Storm-Damaged Trees



Cutting flush against a larger limb or the trunk was once believed to be the best way to prune. We now know that such a method is improper because it weakens a tree's natural defense against the invasion of disease organisms. The possibly harmful effects of pruning wounds can be minimized by making all cuts just to the outside of the raised areas at branch intersections. These features are called bark ridges (above) and branch collars (underneath).

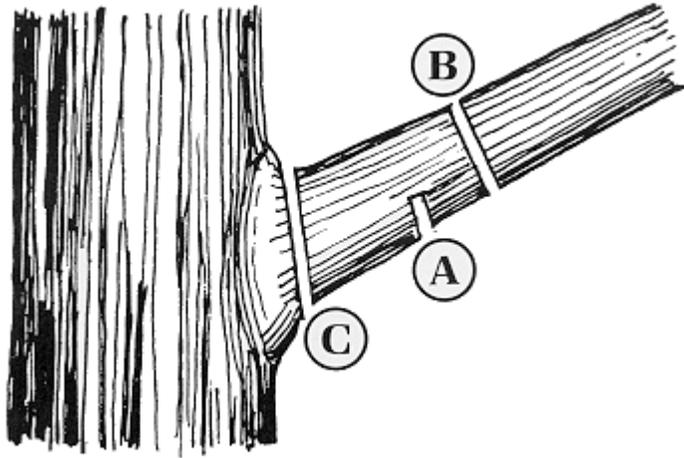
Removing the jagged remains of broken limbs is the most common repair that homeowners can make after a storm. It is also an important task because, if done properly, it will minimize the risk of decay pathogens entering the tree. Following good pruning techniques, cut off limb stubs where they join the next largest branch or the trunk. Do not simply cut immediately below the break.

Because of its weight a large limb could tear loose during pruning, stripping bark and creating jagged edges that invite insects and disease. That won't happen if you follow these steps:

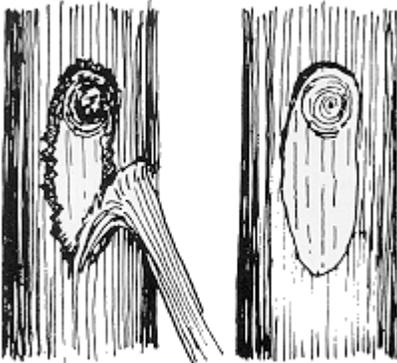
A Cut part way through the branch from beneath at a point one or two feet from the trunk.

B Make a second cut on the top of the branch, several inches out from the first cut. This should allow the length of the limb to fall from its own weight and be safely removed.

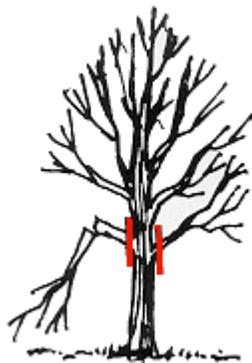
C Complete the job by making a final cut next to the trunk, just outside the branch collar, with the lower edge farther away from the trunk than at the top.



How To Repair Torn Bark



Torn or stripped bark is the result of limbs being violently broken from the tree by wind or branches falling from above. To improve appearance and eliminate hiding places for insects, carefully use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth ragged edges of dead or dying bark. Remove the bark back to the point at which it is attached to the tree. Try not to expose any more cambium (inner bark). Shaping the tear into an ellipse has more aesthetic value than effect on wound closure, and if you do use this traditional method, round the ends to prevent dieback of the cambium at these points. Keep the wound as narrow as you can to hasten wound closing.

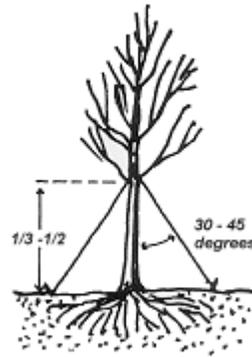
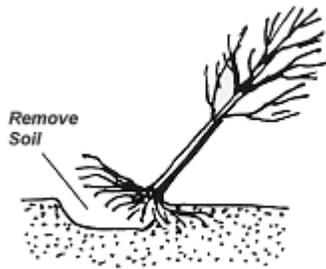


Balance

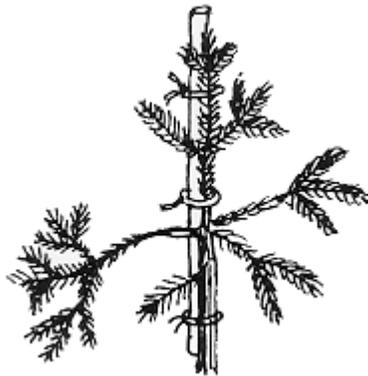
For aesthetic reasons and sometimes to maintain a good center of gravity, look for limbs to remove that are opposite broken one

Partially Uprooted Trees

Young or small trees (under 25 feet in height) that are partially blown over can often be saved. First, remove soil on the uprooted side so the root mass can fit into the hole. Straighten the tree with power equipment, winch or 'come-along', being careful not to break additional roots, and to protect the bait where the rope or cable is attached. With the tree upright, replace soil and anchor in place using 2-3 guy lines attached to a point $1/3$ to $1/2$ the height of the tree. Tamp and water well to remove air spaces around the replaced roots.



Broken Conifers



Occasionally the top of a young conifer will be broken by falling trees or limbs. You can restore form to your tree by helping a branch in the top whorl become the new leader. Select the best, and perhaps longest, and carefully bend it upward. Tie it to a pole that is securely fastened to the trunk. Check every few months to make sure the ties are not cutting into the new leader, and remove the pole in 2-3 years.