CAN THESE TREES BE SAVED?…(all photos and general content courtesy of the National Arbor Day Foundation)

Now that the storm has passed and the majority of the debris has been removed (we know there are still some piles out there) we can start the process of repair and replacement of our lost trees. I'm sure some of you have trees that look like goners but how do you know? Here is some information on how to determine if your trees are salvageable or need to go as well as what should and should not be replanted.

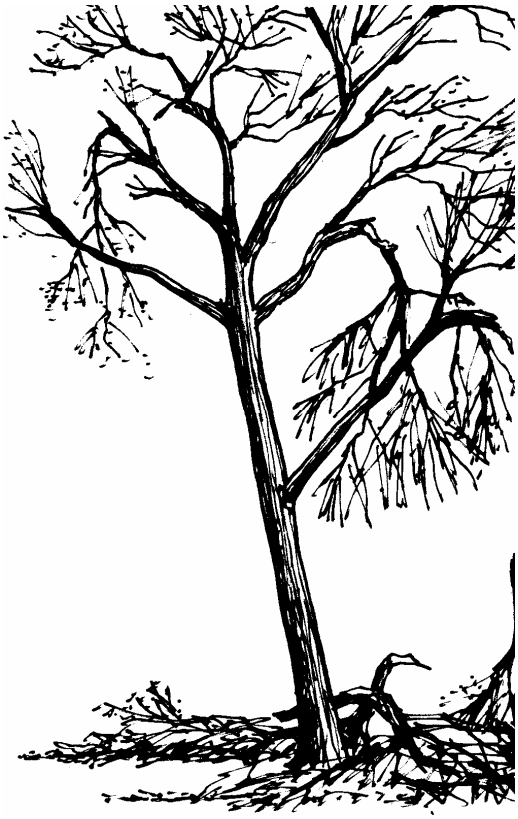
First, remember what we said last week about being safe and hiring a professional. If you're not certain, call a Certified Arborist® to inspect and/or repair your trees. When determining whether or not the tree can be saved ask these questions:

* Is the tree healthy except for the storm damage or was the storm just another stress on an already compromised tree?
* Are major limbs broken? If a majority of the main branches are gone, the tree may have little chance of surviving.
* Has the leader (main upward branch) been lost? This can often lead to distorted or deformed growth.
* Is at least 50% of the crown (leaves and branches) intact? If more than 50% of the crown is removed it will be difficult for the tree to recover.
* How big are the wounds? The bigger the wound in relation to the size of the main limb, the less likely it is to heal.
* Is the tree desirable for its location? If the tree is in the wrong place or is the wrong species it may be best to remove it now.

Here are some illustrations of varying levels of tree damage.

This tree has one major limb broken. It's an easy call. The broken branch should be pruned back to the trunk and the wound monitored closely for decay.
It's a **Keeper**!

Here is another **keeper**. This tree has been damaged but it still has good structure and far less than 50% of the canopy has been removed. Prune out the dead wood and keep it healthy. Also, young trees can withstand a lot more damage than older trees. If its young and the leader is still intact, remove the broken branches and let the tree recover.



This tree is a **wait and see**. A lot of canopy has been lost but there are some structural branches remaining. Do not overly prune as the tree will need all the foliage it can to produce energy for recovery. Prune only the dead wood and then wait to see what happens. On borderline cases, call an arborist and get their opinion.

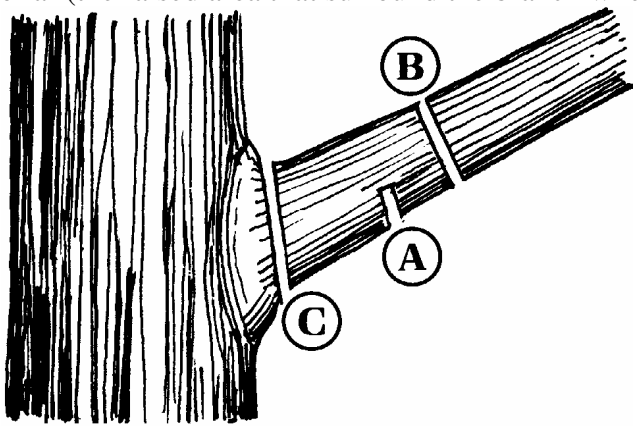
Unfortunately some trees are **goners**. There is no point trying to salvage this tree. The leader (main trunk) has been removed which will lead to deformed growth and the majority of the crown is gone. It is best to remove and start over in this situation.

Anytime you see a split in the trunk or another major structural weakness it is equivalent of a tree heart attack. The wounds are too large to ever mend and the tree has lost its sap lifeline between roots and leaves. It is all but dead.

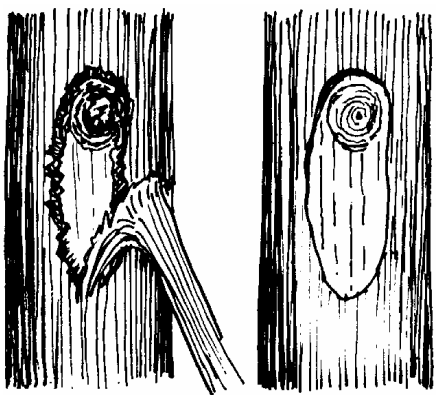
TREE FIRST AID AFTER THE STORM (photos and outline courtesy of the National Arbor Day Foundation):

After you have decided that you are going to repair your storm damaged tree make sure you are making the proper cuts. Here is a quick guide on proper pruning and repair of storm damaged trees. For more detailed information go to the National Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org.

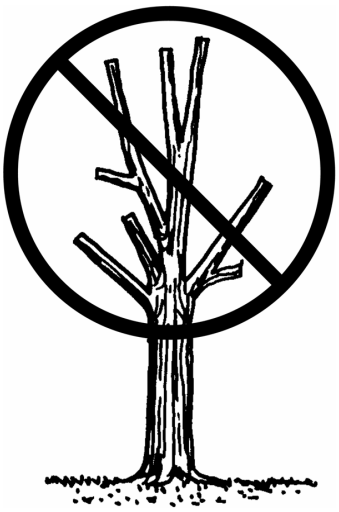
1. Remember if it's a big heavy limb or requires aerial work hire a professional. Always look for the Certified Arborist symbol by the tree company's name.
2. Be safe – look for hanging limbs, powerlines, and know how to use a chainsaw.
3. Remove broken branches attached to the tree. Removing broken limbs can minimize the risk of decay agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Large branches should be pruned back to the main trunk or major limb. Make the cuts in proper sequence in order to prevent tearing and stripping of bark.
    a. Make partial cut from beneath.
    b. Make second cut from above several inches out from a.
    c. Now that the weight is off complete the job with a final cut just outside the branch collar (the raised area that surround the branch where it joins the trunk).



4. Repair torn bark. Use a chisel or sharp knife to smooth the ragged edges of wounds where bark has been torn away. Try not to expose any more of the cambium (greenish inner bark) than is necessary.



5. Resist the urge to overprune. Don't worry if the tree's appearance isn't perfect. With branches gone, your trees may look unbalanced but you'll be surprised at how fast they will heal, grow new foliage, and return to their natural beauty.
6. Don't top your tree. Untrained individuals may urge you to cut back all of the branches, on the mistaken assumption that reducing the length of branches will help avoid breakage in future storms. While storm damage may not always allow for ideal pruning cuts, professional arborists say that "topping" – cutting main branches back to stubs – is one of the worst things you can do for your trees. Stubs will tend to grow back a lot of weakly-attached branches that are even more likely to break when a storm strikes. So while you may feel you are minimizing your potential storm damage you are actually increasing the likelihood that your tree will fail during the next storm. Also, the tree will need all its resources to recover from the stress of storm damage. Topping the tree will reduce the amount of foliage, on which the tree depends for the food and nourishment needed for regrowth. A topped tree that has already sustained major storm damage is more likely to die than repair itself. At best, its recovery will be retarded and it will almost never regain its original shape and beauty. Why add injury to insult when a tree is already struggling to recover.



Remember:

* Evaluate the tree before reacting.
* Make the proper cuts.
* Don't Top!

TREE CITY USA®

Next week we will issue our final press release on REPLANTING especially which trees to NOT put back. Stay Tuned!