

## CAN MY TREE BE SAVED?

Trees have an uncanny ability to recover from storm damage. Oftentimes, storms leave trees looking bare and deflated, but these looks can be deceiving. Ask yourself these questions before you assume your storm-damaged tree can't be saved.



1. **Other than the storm damage, is the tree basically healthy and vigorous?**

If so, and tree is not creating a hazard or suffering major structural damage, it generally will recover if first aid measures are applied.

2. **Are major limbs broken?**

The larger a broken limb is, the harder it will be for the tree to recover from the damage. If a majority of the main branches are gone, the tree may have little chance of surviving.

3. **Has the leader (main upward-trending branch) been lost?**

The tree may live without its leader, but may be a stunted or deformed version of its former self.

4. **Is at least 50 percent of the tree's crown (branches and leaves) still intact?**

A tree with less than half its branches remaining may not be able to produce enough foliage to nourish the tree through another season.

5. **How big are the wounds where branches have been broken or bark has been damaged?**

The larger the wound is in relation to the size of the limb, the less likely it is to heal, leaving the tree vulnerable to disease and pests.

6. **Are there remaining branches that can form a new branch structure?**

Remaining limbs will grow more vigorously as the tree tries to replace its missing foliage.

7. **Is the tree of a desirable species for its location?**

If it is in a poor location (such as beneath a power line) then it may be best to remove it now.

8. **What if my tree has significant bark loss?**

Bark loss should be addressed immediately.



## What Next?

If damage is relatively slight, you can prune broken branches, repair torn bark or rough edges around the wounds and let the tree begin to repair itself. Young trees can sustain quite a bit of damage and recover. With mature trees don't just cut the tree down. Carefully prune broken branches and then give the tree some time to recover. Wait eight weeks after the storm to see what branches re-sprout and which branches are dead. Resist the temptation to prune too heavily – remember that the tree needs all the foliage possible in order to produce enough nourishment. Remove only the damaged limbs, wait and see what happens. Some trees simply can't be saved or they present to high of a safety risk.

## Tree Pruning Dos & Don'ts:

**DO** prune SAFELY within your ability.

**DO** use correct tools & techniques.

**DO** remove dead & broken branches.

**DO** cut at the branch collar (NOT flush to trunk).

**DON'T** Prune within 10 feet of a utility line.

**DON'T** Leave branch stubs.

**DON'T** Strip out inner foliage or top the tree.

**DON'T** over prune – leaves are the food source.

**DON'T** Use wound paint (except if Oak Wilt).

### Local Information:

*Nueces County Extension:  
361-767-5250 or 361-767-5217  
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Consult an expert as poor and inexperienced tree care can leave irreparable harm and disfigurement.

A Certified Arborist should assess damage on a borderline situation and to safely accomplish needed pruning and branch removal. Find one here: <http://isatexas.com/for-the-public/find-an-arborist/>