

ASSESSING HURRICANE-DAMAGED TREES AND DECIDING WHAT TO DO



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Introduction

Right after a hurricane, communities and homeowners need to decide what to do with storm-damaged trees. Although damaged trees may seem to be dying, some trees can be restored, others will need to be removed, and still others will not require any special treatment and can be left alone.

The factors that should be considered when deciding whether to remove or restore storm-damaged trees are discussed in detail in this fact sheet. Use this information to help you make an informed decision about how to treat your damaged trees after a storm.

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I. Setting Priorities Immediately after the Storm

Immediately following a storm, trees need to be sorted out into priority groups. We will discuss situations that require immediate attention as well as those that can be treated later.

The most important priority is to determine if the tree poses a safety hazard to humans or animals or is endangering property. Trees become a potential hazard when a target—a structure, vehicle or a person—could be struck by a falling tree or any of its parts. Therefore, a hazard tree is any tree that if it falls would result in damage to property, people or other valuable trees.