

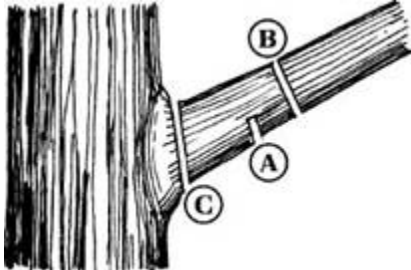
# TREE FIRST AID

## Post-Storm Damages & Treatment

The trail of damages after a major storm truly reveals the power of Mother Nature, and the remains can be devastating, especially for trees. Unprotected, trees are vulnerable to the storm's damages and the wounds might look fatal. However, even though major branches may be broken, foliage might be shredded, or the bark may be torn and gouged, trees have an amazing ability to recover from even the most severe cases.

First aid for damaged trees after a major storm can help trees recover, urges the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Follow a few simple tree first aid procedures immediately after a major storm:

1. **Do not try to do it all yourself.** If large limbs are broken or hanging, or if ladder or overhead chain saw work is needed, it is a job for a professional arborist.
2. **Take safety precautions.** Look up and look down. Be on the alert and stay away from downed utility lines and dangerous hanging branches that look like they are ready to fall.
3. **Assess the damages.** Evaluate your trees carefully by asking the following questions: Other than the storm damage, is the tree basically healthy and vigorous? Are major limbs or the leader (the main upward-trending branch on most trees) branch still remaining? Is at least 50 percent of the tree's crown (branches and leaves) still intact? Are there remaining branches that can form a new branch structure? If you answered "yes" to the majority of these questions, there is a good chance for complete recovery. For assistance, hire an ISA Certified Arborist to determine the tree's conditions.
4. **Remove any broken branches or stubs still attached to the tree.**



Removing the jagged remains of smaller sized broken limbs to minimize the risk of decay agents entering the wound. Smaller branches should be pruned at the point where they join larger ones. Follow the pruning guidelines shown for proper cuts to help the tree to recover faster. Making the cut illustrated with a handsaw is fine - with a chain saw it could create a hazard. For larger branches that are broken, a professional arborist who has the necessary equipment and knowledge needed to do the job safely should cut them back to the trunk or a main limb.

5. **Resist the urge to over-prune** (no longer recommended). Do not worry if the tree's appearance is not perfect. With branches gone, your trees may look unbalanced or naked. You will be surprised at how fast they will heal, grow new foliage, and return to their natural beauty.



**Do not top your trees!**

Untrained individuals may urge you to cut back all of the branches, on the mistaken assumption that it will help avoid breakage in future storms. However, professional arborists say that "topping," the cutting of main branches back to stubs, is extremely harmful and unhealthy for your trees. Stubs will often grow back many weakly attached branches that are higher and are more likely to break when a storm strikes. Also, topping will reduce the amount of foliage, on which the tree depends for the food and nourishment needed for re-growth. A topped tree that has already sustained major storm damage is more likely to die than repair itself.