

Things You Should Know About Trees and Hurricanes

Hurricane Season concerns South Florida residents about the potential hazards during a hurricane. There are some things you should know about South Florida trees and hurricanes. We may not be able to control how strong or when a hurricane or big storm will hit South Florida, but there is one thing we can do...be prepared! Besides putting up shutters and buying the necessary supplies, your first instinct might be to prune or take out your trees to prevent damage to your property. We want you to think again. Because the right tree in the right place with proper maintenance may actually help protect your property from strong winds by acting as a buffer.

1. ***Pick the right tree and tree species when planting.*** Pick Florida Grade #1 trees. Co-dominant leaders (2 main trunks) can cause structural failure. Some tree species are more brittle and will not bend with the wind. Trees with shallow root systems may blow over in strong winds. Trees with poor wind resistance and shallow root systems should be avoided.

Examples of trees that are wind resistant	Examples of trees that are brittle	Examples of shallow-rooted trees
Orange Geiger Mango Live Oak Most Natives	<i>Mahogany</i> Royal Poinciana Bottle Brush Frangipani	Ficus /Banyon trees Yellow Tabebuia Coconuts

2. ***Prune only when necessary and hire a certified arborist.*** Contrary to popular belief, it is not necessary to prune trees before a storm approaches.

You should NOT over-prune, lollipop, or lion tail (over-lift) because:	What you should DO!
Over-pruning a tree or excessive trimming can kill it or weaken the tree making it more vulnerable to break apart during a storm.	If you need to prune your trees, make sure the lawn care worker/tree trimmer is a certified arborist. Ask to see their registration/license and insurance. Get a quote in writing.
Lollipop-ping your trees make them top heavy and more likely to fall over in high wind.	Cut out dead, diseased, and damaged wood and water sprouts.
Lion-tailing over lifting (makes a dense canopy that the wind will tip over instead of	Remove mainly the interior branches. This will thin the canopy of the tree and

<p>blow through)</p> <p>Improperly pruned trees reduce an already scarce tree canopy in Miami-Dade County. (A depleted tree canopy has a direct environmental and monetary impact in our community).</p> <p>Improper tree pruning is a violation of Chapter 24 of the Miami-Dade County Code, and the responsible person or Property owners may be subject to a fine and / or other enforcement action.</p>	<p>allow the high winds to pass through it.</p> <p>Make sure to correctly dispose of all tree cuttings (branches and stumps left out in the open can become projectiles during a storm).</p> <p>NEVER "top" or "hayrack" any tree. Do not remove more than 25% of the tree canopy or you will "starve" the tree as it gets its food via the leaves.</p>
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3. *Right (Stand up) downed trees after a storm.* You can save trees that have toppled over after a hurricane or strong storm, but you may need a professional's help. Don't touch trees with any downed utility lines. If trees are large or limbs are broken and hanging, let a certified arborist take care of the damaged tree. You may need heavy equipment to right larger trees. In the meantime, cover the trunk and roots of the trees with sheets, wet newspapers, (no plastic) so that the trunk doesn't get "sunburned" or the roots get dried out.

For more information call:

[DERM](#)

305.372.6574 / 305.372.6789

[Department of Solid Waste Management](#)

305.594.1500

[University of Florida Cooperative Extension](#)

Tree and Lawn Care

305.248.3311

[Sunshine State One](#)

Home Survey Before Planting:

1.800.432.4770

[FPL](#)

Tree Pruning and Information:

1.800.Dial FPL / 1.800.342.5375