

What trees to plant?

Studies of trees surviving hurricanes in Florida and the gulf coast found live oak, southern magnolia, and bald cypress to be the most wind resistant large trees. Other large maturing trees that proved moderately to highly wind resistant in the studies were hickory, persimmon, shumard oak, river birch, black gum (also known as tupelo), dogwood, American holly, yaupon, crape myrtle, and sabal palms. Others that performed nearly as well were Japanese maple, ironwood, sweet bay magnolia, redbud, and fringe tree.



We need to push forward in demonstrating the life, infrastructure, and economy-saving importance of cities investing adequately in an urban forestry program. This includes hiring technical expertise and giving forestry a seat at the planning table when decisions are made about every aspect of the city's environment.

While risk of tree failure can never be completely eliminated, going all-in with a truly comprehensive urban forestry program would reduce risk significantly by:

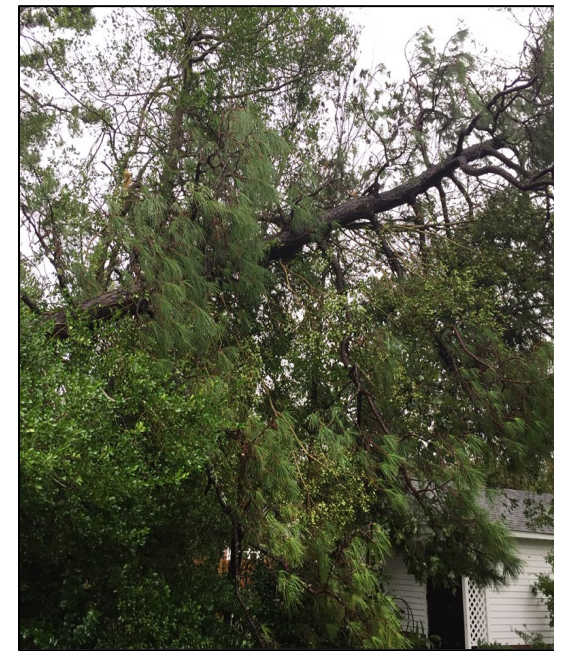
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive urban forestry plan
- Conducting structural pruning for both young and mature trees
- Planting more wind- and salt-resistant species
- Selecting the right species and designing the right place, with adequate soil volume
- Planting high-quality trees with central leaders and good structure
- Assembling an urban forestry strike team to deploy in the wake of disasters.



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HURRICANES AND TREES

WHAT TO AVOID, EXPECT, AND
WHAT TREES DO BEST

Alliance for Cape Fear Trees

Scientists at the University of Florida tracked the impacts 10 hurricanes had on the urban forests where they hit, from Andrew that devastated South Florida in 1992 to the infamous Katrina along the Gulf Coast in 2005. While they found that increased wind speed did increase the likelihood that trees would fail, other factors significantly impacted the degree of damage to a city's tree canopy during a hurricane:

- Trees in groups survive wind better than individuals
- Some species resist wind better than others
- Trees that lose their leaves during a hurricane are not necessarily dead
- Better and deeper soils mean fewer tree failures
- Native trees survive better
- Older and unhealthy trees are more likely to be damaged
- Well-pruned trees survive hurricanes better



What trees to avoid?

Bad hurricane resistant trees include pecan, Bradford pear, Leyland cypress, lacebark elm, red and silver maple, green ash, pines, laurel and water oak, and tulip poplar.

Established trees in your yard should be prepared for the arrival of a storm by light annual pruning which will allow for air movement. Thinning cuts should be employed to open the trees up. A thinning cut is a cut that is made all the way back to the trunk or a major branch. Never remove more than one third of a tree's canopy. Hatracking, or topping a tree, is not an acceptable method and will create branches with weak attachment points which will break easily in a storm.

Trees that have toppled slightly or have minimal damage to the roots or branches can be saved in time. With proper pruning and thinning, some trees can make a full recovery depending on the damage done. The same can be said for trees with light structural damage, by adding braces for support.

"Taller trees are more susceptible to windthrow," Clarke said. "The tree trunk acts as a lever, so the force applied to the roots and trunk increases with height." – Jane Clarke via www.accuweather.com



For more information visit:

<https://www.fairchildgarden.org>

<https://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/hurricane-proof-your-yard-with-these-expert-wind-resistant-tree-planting-tips/70004936>

<https://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/06/planting-trees-with-hurricanes-in-mind/>

<https://www.americanforests.org/blog/hurricanes-trees-its-complicated/>