

# the miami laker

The original northwest Miami-Dade community newspaper for the Town of Miami Lakes & surrounding areas

MIAMI LAKES, FLORIDA

## Homeowners can help trees survive hurricanes by taking time to prepare for storms

With hurricane season in full swing, thousands of trees are at risk for damage by heavy rains and wind which can cause trees to crack, split, and even uproot, which can lead to further property damage and power outages.

Homeowners may be able to prevent tree damage during a storm, and enable trees to recover by following a few suggestions from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

### Pre-storm preparation:

Look for potential hazards. Investigate the condition of trees. Look for damage such as cracks in the trunk or major limbs; hollow, aged, and decayed trees; hanging branches; improperly formed branches; one-sided or significantly leaning trees; and branches that may potentially rub the house or fall on utility lines.

Depending on the existing problem, a Certified Arborist should be consulted to either remove the tree or to prune potentially hazardous branches.

"Recognizing and reducing tree hazards not only increases the safety of your property and that of your neighbors, but also improves the trees' health and may increase its longevity and chance of survival," said Jim Skiera, ISA's executive director.

### Know your tree species:

Some species are more prone to storm damage. Have a Certified Arborist evaluate your trees for hardiness and resilience. Being aware of which trees may succumb to harsh weather conditions will help property owners decide if they want to replace these potentially dangerous species.

### Do not top trees:

Untrained individuals may rec-

ommend cutting 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 trees. The stubs often produce many weakly attached branches that are higher and 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 regrowth. A topped tree that has already sustained major storm damage is more likely to die than repair itself.

### Protect your assets:

Trees may increase property value by up to 20 percent. Find out if your homeowner's insurance will cover any damage your landscape may sustain due to unnatural causes, and include the total value of your trees when listing assets for coverage.

A Certified Arborist who has experience with appraisals can provide an estimated value by inspecting your trees. Be sure to document the value of potential loss with photos of the trees and the evaluation by the arborist.

*The International Society of Arboriculture is a non-profit organization supporting tree research and education around the world. As part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information, and to find a local ISA Certified Arborist, visit [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com).*