


How to Care for Storm-Damaged Trees

After an ice storm or severe weather, your trees may need first aid. Proper care can mean the difference between survival and loss. Follow these steps to assess, clean up, and support your trees safely.

Step 1: Assess the Damage

- ◆ Check for Safety Hazards – Look for hanging or broken branches that could fall. Stay clear of trees near power lines and call professionals if needed.
- ◆ Determine if the Tree Can Be Saved – If the tree is still structurally sound and not a safety risk, it may recover with care.
- ◆ Consult a Professional if Unsure – ISA Certified Arborists can assess tree health and perform high-risk pruning.

Step 2: Remove Small Broken Branches (If Safe to Do So)

 Safety First: If the damage involves large branches, climbing, or chainsaws, hire a professional.

- ◆ Use the Three-Cut Method for Large Branches:
 1. Undercut – Make a small cut underneath the branch a few inches from the trunk.
 2. Top Cut – Cut just past the undercut to remove the weight of the branch.
 3. Final Cut – Trim the remaining stub just outside the branch collar (the swollen area where the branch meets the trunk).
- ◆ Use Sharp, Clean Tools – Dull or jagged cuts slow healing. Sterilize tools between trees with 70% isopropyl alcohol or a 10% bleach solution.
- ◆ Prune Lightly – Only remove broken branches. Avoid excessive pruning, especially on mature trees.

Step 3: Decide Whether to Seal the Wound

- ◆ In Most Cases, Do NOT Use Wound Dressings – Trees heal best naturally.
- ◆ Exception: Oak Trees – To prevent Oak Wilt, apply a non-toxic pruning sealant or a thin coat of water-based paint on fresh cuts.

Step 4: Support Tree Recovery Year-Round

- 🌱 Water During Droughts – Deep watering helps strengthen roots.
- 🌱 Mulch Properly – Apply 2-4 inches of mulch around (but not touching) the base.
- 🌱 Avoid Soil Compaction – Keep foot traffic and heavy equipment away from tree roots.
- 🌱 Protect Against Mechanical Damage – Keep lawnmowers and trimmers from nicking the bark.

Step 5: Plan for the Future

- 🌱 Consider Planting a Replacement Tree – If your mature tree is badly damaged, start growing a shade-tolerant species nearby.
- 🌱 Choose Native Trees – They are more resilient to local weather conditions. Living Green Barrie offers native tree sales and community planting events—check our website for details!

Final Thoughts

Trees are incredibly resilient. With proper care and patience, they can recover and continue to provide shade, beauty, and environmental benefits for years to come.

