



Landscape Restoration Following a Natural Disaster

Maryland Historical Trust

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, as many trees and shrubs as possible need to be salvaged. Here are some helpful hints adapted from a flier prepared by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office following Hurricane Hugo:

1. Do not act without first checking with your insurance company. Some may not cover debris removal. Also, keep in mind that any lost tree will adversely affect your property value. Do not be pressured into any tree removals. Removal should not be considered before you are sure the tree cannot be saved. Save anything you can!
2. Remedy all safety hazards by removing downed limbs and branches. Use care in removing branches still attached as they may kick back while being detached.
3. Straighten uprooted shrubs and small trees as soon as possible, and get their roots back into the ground. This will save them from dehydration. Stake small trees with guy wires, adding a piece of rubber hose for protection where any wire comes into contact with the trunk.
4. Even with the assistance of a certified arborist, efforts to save large uprooted trees often are unsuccessful. To enhance the possibility of saving a large tree that has been uprooted, it must be stabilized by covering exposed roots with straw, burlap, or soil and keeping the roots moist.
5. Some trees and shrubs may dry out and defoliate in the few weeks following a natural disaster, but you should not assume the plant has been lost. It may re-foliate next spring.
6. Prune broken wood to the next "fork." Pruning cuts should be made 1/4" to 1/2" back from the fork. Look for a swollen area, the branch collar, near this junction and make the cut there. This area contains chemicals needed to help heal the new cut.
7. For assistance, contact a certified arborist.

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