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## Pruning Storm Damaged Trees

Mike Bauer, Horticulturist, Moose Valley Farms

On the evening of July 23, a severe windstorm struck north Idaho, and there have been reports of downed and damaged trees throughout the area. Many readers may be asking, "How do I care for my damaged trees?"

Assess the damage – is the tree worth saving? If it has at least 50% of the canopy left after the storm, then it is worth trying to save it. Is the tree a hazard to property or people? If it is, consider removing it.

Consider the type of damage to the tree. Tears, breaks and splits are all bad for the tree because the jagged borders of the injury heal very slowly, and have the potential for diseases and insects to enter the wound.

Prune judiciously. Resist the urge to prune heavily, because the tree will need as much of its canopy as possible in order to have the energy to recover. Prune only broken branches, with the goal of reducing wounds to have the least exposure to air as possible. Trim bark that is peeling. If the branch to be removed is 2 inches in diameter or more, use the three-cut method to assure the bark isn't peeled away when the branch is removed. A three cut prune can be achieved by making a cut from underneath the branch a few inches out from the trunk. The next cut is made from the top of the branch a few inches out from the first cut. The third cut is the final cut made at the branch collar.

Give the tree time to recover. It may take years for the tree to recover, but if it has a reasonable chance for survival, take the time to see how it will fare after the storm.

*Mike Bauer is the Horticulturist for Moose Valley Farms, a full-service garden center located in Naples at mile marker 495. Please feel free to call us at 267-5108 or stop in if you have any questions.*