

# Preliminary Assessment of Storm Damaged Trees

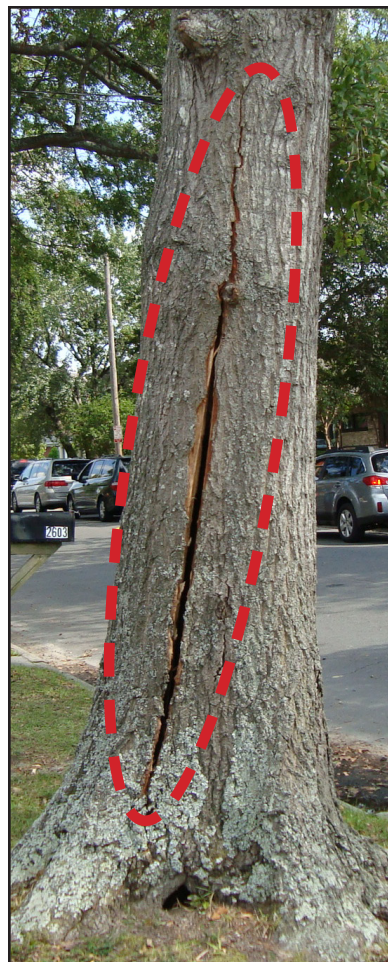
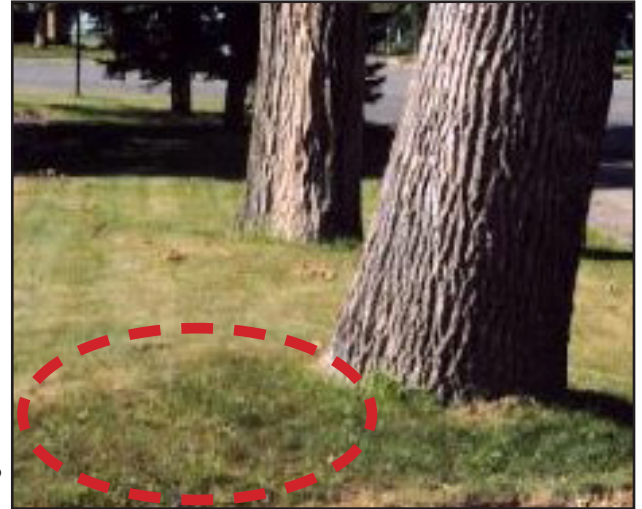


High winds coupled with rain and ice storms can cause varying degrees of damage to your trees. After a storm event, add completing a simple visual inspection of your trees to your post storm to-do list. There may be safety issues present that will require immediate attention or more long-term tree health implications that should be addressed. Complete the following steps to identify common types of damage and assign them the appropriate priority for action.

## Root Damage – Potential for Windfall

### Tree Is Leaning

- The tree/trunk is straight and appears to be leaning now but was upright before the storm.
- There is mounding of the soil around the base of the tree on the windward side.
  - Are there cracks in the soil of the mounding?
  - Stand on the mound.
    - Does it feel soft when you jump on the mound? This could indicate there may be open spaces or gaps in the soil underneath you.
    - Can you feel the mound move when the wind blows?



## Trunk Damage

### Cracks

- Longitudinal cracks as pictured here.
- Horizontal cracks or buckling cracks.
- Cracks in conjunction with hollows and or decay is a more serious failure risk.



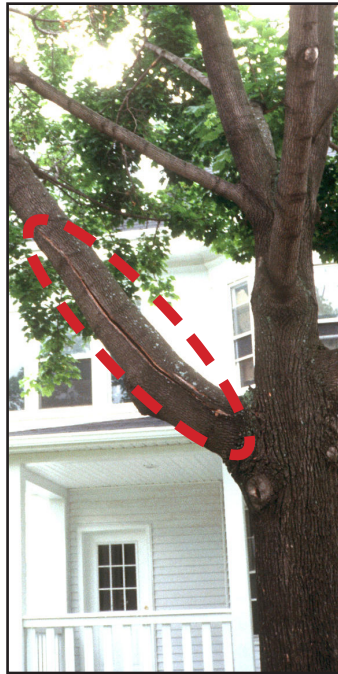
### Trunk/Main Branch (Scaffold) Attachments

- Cracks and Splits.
- Ripped branches revealing the heartwood of the tree.



# Branches

Potential windfall, cracking, splits, hangers and drooping branches pose a safety risk and should be addressed as soon as possible. Secure the services of a qualified arborist to evaluate the tree and take the appropriate management action. The N.C. Forest Service is available to complete individual tree assessments or, if serious storms have caused area wide damage of public trees, assist with community wide assessments and recovery efforts. If a Federal Disaster has been declared funding may also be available to fund assessments, pruning and removal costs.



## Branches

Broken hanging branches  
Atypical "drooping" branches

## Main Branches

Cracks and Splits

## Branch Loss

The loss of live branches will impact the health of a tree. Corrective pruning will be required or in severe cases tree removal may be warranted. Variables that weigh in a preservation vs. removal decision are the health of the tree prior to damage, the total percentage of crown loss and how that crown loss is distributed in the tree. A qualified arborist will need to perform an evaluation.



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