

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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*“Managing Storm Damaged Trees”*

Recent storms across the Midwest have left many homeowners with damaged trees from heavy wind and rain. This may leave you wondering what can be done with these storm damaged trees. Well, unfortunately, not all trees should be salvaged. Trees with bark that has split and exposed the cambium or those where the main trunk has split are not likely to survive.

Trees with so many broken limbs that the structure is altered may be better off being replaced. Though these trees may produce new growth, they are under such extreme stress they are much more susceptible to diseases/pests and can be dangerous due to increase risk for further breaks.

Prune broken branches to the next large branch or the trunk. Don't cut branches flush with the trunk, but instead cut to the collar area where the branch attaches to the trunk. Cutting flush to the trunk creates a larger wound that takes longer to heal.

Cut back large limbs progressively. The first cut should be made on the underside of the branch about 15 inches away from the trunk. Cut about one-third of the way through the limb. The second cut should be made on top of the branch but about two inches further away from the trunk, creating an angle when joined with the first cut. This will cause the branch to break away. The third cut should be made at the collar to remove the resulting stub.

Information comes from K-State horticulture expert, Cynthia Domenghini.