

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Storm Damaged Landscape Immediate Help

Storms inflict significant damage to gardens and landscapes across Nebraska each year. Initial reactions to storm damage can be overwhelming when trying to decide what steps to take to start the recovery process. Here are some simple tips to help find a place to start in the recovery process to reduce further damage to the landscape and anyone who is helping in the process.

1. Locate your utility lines on your property. Are any of them down and present a safety hazard? If there is any doubt that utility lines are down and others could accidentally be harmed, call the utility companies for all to be inspected and repaired before cleaning up landscape damage.
2. Inspect trees from a distance to see if any broken and hanging branches and limbs are found in the canopies. If these are present, do not work under those areas to avoid a limb or branch falling and severely hurting someone picking up debris.
3. Beware of tree trimming services that suddenly appear after a storm that are not from the local area. These individuals follow storm damaged areas, trying to sell their services. Many times, these individuals do poor quality work, do not carry liability insurance, do not have a license to work in specific towns, and can cost homeowners dearly from poor quality work, high expense, and potential accidents on personal property.
4. When considering tree service work to clean up storm damaged trees, always do some background research before hiring. Ask about previous tree service experience in the

area, if workers have attended arborist training, possess liability insurance in case of an accident on personal property, and have a license to work in specific communities if it is required by local village governments.

5. Trees should be removed if they have been blown over, have severely damaged trunks or half of the canopy's branches are broken.
6. Remove dead or broken branches if it can be done safely without the help of a tree service. Remove branches at the branch collar, not leaving stubs behind.
7. On smaller trees and shrubs, cut off broken or bent branches and stems with a sharp bypass hand pruner above the closest undamaged node. Stake small trees and shrubs as needed for no more than one year after the storm event.
8. Allow the leaves and blooms to fall off of herbaceous plants naturally. Rake up fallen plant material after they fall. If vegetable garden plants are severely damaged, replace with new transplants or re-seed crops as needed.
9. Do not fertilize any plant material after a storm. Plant material will need to recover before even considering fertilizing again.
10. Mulch under trees, shrubs and in flower beds to help reduce grass and weed competition for moisture and nutrients. Do not mulch right at the base of plants. Mulch under trees and shrubs no deeper than three inches. Do not mulch more than two inches deep in flower beds and gardens.
11. Keep soils moist and not soggy during this growing season to reduce moisture stress in the entire landscapes.

12. Be patient and watch for further damage to landscape plants or secondary pests and diseases that may arise on damaged plant material. Being patient will probably be one of the most difficult aspects of the recovery process.

Storm damage to landscape plants will vary in severity from property to property.

Recommendations may vary due to the plant material and the type of damage it received.

If anyone has any questions about responding to storm damage to gardens and landscapes, please contact me by sending an email message to dlott2@unl.edu, by following my Nebraska Gardener blog at <https://nebrgardener.wordpress.com/> or by calling my office at (308) 696-6781.

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