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The best defense against storm damage is a good offense. Work diligently now to minimize any future impact. Extremely severe weather can cause the loss of most, if not all, trees in an area, regardless of any efforts to reduce the damage before it occurs. Damage from less severe weather can be lessened by inspecting trees for weak branching habits that are more likely to fail. In some cases, weak areas can be reinforced with cables or bracing rods. Ideally, poor branching structures — tight V-shaped forks or attachments, should be removed when the tree is small. Doing so lessens the risk of that fork splitting as the tree matures.

Beyond resolving weak branching habits, be aware that longer limbs in trees that tend to have broad, spreading canopies, should have the end-weight reduced to lessen the surface area exposed to severe weather such as ice, snow, sleet, and high winds. Professional tree climbers are trained to climb out to the ends of the limbs to reduce the weight.

Arborists also consider the strength of the wood for each species of tree when determining corrective actions for structural deficiencies. An oak will typically have strong wood, whereas a maple will be weaker-wooded and more likely to break.

Tree limbs can bow to a great degree without breaking. In some situations, however, high winds can cause internal cracks that are difficult to see. Once the severe weather event has struck, a certified arborist should inspect your tree for pruning needs to remove broken and damaged limbs making proper pruning cuts. The arborist should also evaluate any splits or cracks in trunks or branches, as well as inspect cables and bracing rods on mature trees for any adjustments they made need, and also check hardware staking on newly planted trees for possible adjustments.



WFAA's Channel 8  
Photographic Coverage of  
the Damage Caused by Ten  
Tornadoes that Struck the  
Dallas Area on October 20,  
2019. All photos provided  
by WFAA.



WFAA's Channel 8 Photographic Coverage continued.





