Despite dry spring prepare your landscape for tropical storms

With our dry spring, many people would welcome a tropical storm to bring some rain. More than likely, we will experience a tropical storm or possibly a hurricane before the season is done. As a result, we may even end the year with average rainfall.

Because of the likelihood of a storm, you’d do well to prepare your landscape for a hurricane? Theresa Friday, UF/IFAS Extension Agent in Santa Rosa County, provides the following advice on preparing your landscape for the hurricane season.

Falling trees and flying landscape debris during a storm can cause damage. Evaluate your landscape for potential tree hazards. Pruning or removing trees once a hurricane watch has been announced is risky and tree trimming debris left along the street is hazardous.

Now is a good time to remove dead or dying trees, to prune decayed or dead branches and to stake newly planted trees. Also inspect your trees for signs of disease or insect infestation that may further weaken them.

Professional help sometimes is your best option when dealing with larger jobs. Property damage could be reduced by having a professional arborist evaluate unhealthy, injured or questionable trees to assess risk and treat problems.

Hiring a certified arborist can be a worthwhile investment. To find a certified arborist in your area contact the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) at 217-355-9411 or online at www.isa-arbor.com. You may also contact the Florida Chapter of ISA at 941-342-0153 or online at www.floridaisa.org.

Consider removing trees that have low wind resistance, are at the end of their life span and have the potential to endanger lives or property. For example, laurel oaks are relatively short-lived, living only about 50 years, and they tend to lose their strength and stability faster than most other oaks. They have low wind resistance and also have brittle wood and a shallow root system. If you have a big, old laurel oak within falling distance of your home, you may consider removing it before the next storm.

Tree species with the lowest wind resistance include pecan, tulip poplar, cherry laurel, Bradford pear, southern red oak, laurel oak, water oak, Chinese tallow, Chinese elm, southern red cedar, Leyland cypress, sand pine and spruce pine.

Pine species vary in their wind resistance, usually with longleaf and slash pines showing better survival rates than loblolly and sand pine. However, when pines become large, they may cause a lot of damage if located close to homes or other valuable structures. Large pines for this reason are classified as having medium
to poor wind-resistance. For this reason, it’s best to plant pines away from structures in more open areas.

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