



# Are Your Trees Ready for Hurricane Season?

By the City of Biloxi Tree Committee

As the old sayings go, “The best time to plant a tree is today” and “The best time to prep your trees for hurricane season is last year.”

While neither of these brings much clarity or science to the discussion of preparing your trees for this hurricane season, they do communicate the importance of planting, planning, and caring for one of our region’s most important natural resources: the urban forest. The benefits include everything from creating a natural buffer between properties that beautifies the landscape, to ecological benefits such as stormwater absorption, wind reduction, and wildlife shelter.

High winds and storms can cause damage to trees and nearby dwellings, especially during hurricane season. For this reason, LSU’s AgCenter compiled scientific data to place trees in one of two categories: “Survivor Trees” or “Victim Trees”:

**Survivor Trees** — *compact with a major tap root, well-developed secondary roots, well-tapered trunk, low center of gravity. Healthy, young-to-middle-aged and well-maintained.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bald Cypress</li> <li>• Live Oak</li> <li>• Sabal Palm</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Gum</li> <li>• Shumard Oak</li> <li>• Winged Elm</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Other Wind-Resistant Species**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Elm</li> <li>• American Holly</li> <li>• American Hornbeam</li> <li>• Black Locust</li> <li>• Dahoon Holly</li> <li>• Hackberry</li> <li>• Nuttall Oak</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pond Cypress</li> <li>• River Birch</li> <li>• Southern Magnolia</li> <li>• Sycamore</li> <li>• Sweet Bay Magnolia</li> <li>• Sweet Gum</li> <li>• Tulip Tree</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

Specifically, Cypress, and the Southern Magnolia are protected in the City of Biloxi. These species are native to our region and grow to be strong, stable trees, largely resistant to wind damage when properly cared for according to ANSI A300 Standards, which is the American National Standard for Tree Care.

**Victim Trees** — *shallow-rooted, high center of gravity, weighed down by a dense canopy, fast-growing and weak-wooded.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pecans</li> <li>• Pines</li> <li>• Red Cedars</li> <li>• Ornamental Pears</li> <li>• Willows</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silver Maples</li> <li>• Box Elders</li> <li>• Cottonwoods</li> <li>• Hickories</li> <li>• Some Elms</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

The City of Biloxi specifically exempts pecan and pine trees from requiring a permit for removal. Similarly, the water oak was recently added to the list of exempt species for the same reason. They’re fast-growing, weak-wooded, and have a shallow root system.

Consider conducting an inventory of your property and assess whether the trees closest to your dwelling are in the “Survivor” or “Wind-Resistant” categories. A certified arborist should be consulted if you suspect that a limb is diseased and warrants treatment or removal by a professional to protect it against wind damage.

For more information or questions, contact the Biloxi Community Development Department at 228-435-6280.

**WANT TO DIG DEEPER?**

- ▶ Visit [LSUAgCenter.com](http://LSUAgCenter.com); search Choosing Trees for Hurricane Resistance
- ▶ Search “ANSI A300 Tree Care” on the web