

Hurricane Preparedness for Your Garden

PRE-HURRICANE SEASON

- Cut back all trees and weak branches.
- Thin foliage so wind can flow freely through branches, decreasing the chance that trees/plants will be uprooted.
- Secure the parts of a fence that appear weakened or loose. Hurricane-force winds can easily dislodge boards and pieces from a fence creating flying debris.

APPROACHING HURRICANE

If a hurricane is approaching, contact garden members so they can take action to secure their own plots. If you have time, help your neighbors. Items left in their plots may cause damage elsewhere.

All members should:

- Collect vegetative debris and place trimmings in designated receptacles for pick up (do not leave them loose or on the ground).
- Remove any items that could become missiles in a storm such as lawn furniture, unsecured landscape borders, birdbaths, tools, decorative items, gnomes, signs, and branches.
- Bring hoses, trash cans, wind-chimes, and pots into the shed or take them home.
- Anchor heavier objects deep into the ground. Items that cannot be removed must be tied down securely.
- Take items from sheds that may be damaged by water home and store them in high areas away from windows (e.g., power tools, paperwork).
- Close and lock gates and shed doors.

Once a storm has been named, or a hurricane watch or warning has been issued, do not create massive amounts of vegetative debris or trim trees since normal collection routes may be suspended. Materials should not be placed at the curb or taken to the landfill during this time. **High winds can quickly pick up any yard object that isn't well anchored or heavy enough to resist the uplift forces. These objects have the potential to cause significant damage to anything in the surrounding areas!**

AFTER THE STORM HAS PASSED

- Be patient while waiting for vegetation and storm debris to be picked up. The collection of household garbage, which could attract pests, is the priority.
- If flooding has occurred, food safety may be a concern. Vegetables may decompose rapidly and be susceptible to diseases. Check with Extension before consuming any produce that may have been contaminated by flooding.
- Water sources may be contaminated. Extension will notify garden members when it is safe to water plants.
- Inspect the garden and shed for damage and notify staff of any concerns.
- Use caution during clean up. Members must take Extension's Power Tools Training course to use power tools at County parks.

If you have questions, contact UF/IFAS Extension for further guidance. Stacy Spriggs, Community and School Gardens Coordinator, can be reached at 941-861-9815 (office); 941-400-2298 (cell) or sspriggs@scgov.net.