

The Rainy Season Has Begun. Are Your Oak Trees Safe?

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Oak trees are long lived “friends” in our landscapes and neighborhoods. If you have been taking care of them, they will serve you well and many generations that follow.

Are branches falling now that there have been a few inches of water from recent rain? If so, you may need to seek the services of a Certified Arborist to evaluate the health and safety of your oak tree(s). Damaged root systems or fungal attacks may be the cause.

Do you know what kind of Oak tree you have on your property? Although trees may live for a long time, they do not live forever. The Laurel Oak has a much shorter lifespan than a Live Oak. The leaves of the Laurel Oak are usually flat while the leaves of the Live Oak are usually cupped. The bark on the Laurel Oak is smooth when compared to the Live Oak.

Can you see the connection between branches and the tree trunk? Are the “v-shaped” or “u-shaped”? V-shaped connections are weak connections and are under a lot of pressure. Eventually that sort of connection will fail and your tree will split at this connection. The resulting damage to the tree and your property can be very costly or even deadly.

Do you see any holes in the trunk or where limbs have been previously broken off? These holes can collect water and provide fungal rots within the tree that will go unnoticed until the tree falls over. Pruned roots for sidewalks, pavements and roadways may also provide entry wounds for fungal attacks and weakened trees that look very healthy on the exterior of the tree. Also, open wounds inside the trunk of the tree are not visible from outside. This may be something you may wish a Certified Arborist check while evaluating your tree, especially if you have a Laurel Oak.

If the Certified Arborist determines that the tree is unhealthy and a hazard to your property you may want have it removed. Some municipalities may require a fee to remove the tree and some home association “Covenants and Restrictions” may require you to replace a removed tree with a similar tree. Make sure you know what you need to do in this case.

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To obtain a current list of Certified Arborists in the Central Florida area, visit the website: www.treesaregood.org , select “Find a Tree Care Service” tab and follow the directions.

For additional information, contact your local UF/IFAS Extension Service Office in your county.