



For Immediate Release

Number of trees destroyed following historic U.S. wildfires remains unknown ISA advises on evaluating damage and fire prevention to stay ahead of outbreaks

CHAMPAIGN, IL (March 2017) – With thousands of trees potentially destroyed or dying in devastating wildfires across parts of the U.S., the [International Society of Arboriculture](http://www.isa-arbor.com) (ISA) encourages property owners to hire Certified Arborists to assess tree damage and assist in recovery following such disasters.

Wildfires are impacting the western, central and southern Plains right now, including Texas, where wildfires are an ongoing issue. Last year, fire storms burned tens of thousands of acres in Tennessee and North Carolina.

“The recovery is progressing, but we’re still in a holding pattern where trees are concerned,” says Jim Cortese, Consulting Arborist, Board Certified Master Arborist® and ISA Certified Arborist® with TIPCO, a plant health care provider in Knoxville, Tennessee. “Thick bark trees like chestnut oaks will fare better, but the key is the heat of the fire. Did it run higher up the trunks of the trees or did the flames stay closer to the ground? What if the tree bark is only burned on one side?”

“Tree buds will begin in March, so once we have a few leaves on the trees, we can think about ways to help them survive.”

With wildfire outbreaks a more constant threat in Texas, reducing the intensity of fires is a priority. For that reason, ISA Texas and the Texas A&M Forest Service are in partnership with a focus on fire prevention.

“Wildfires are like Emerald Ash Borer, hurricanes, snow and ice it’s a matter of when, not if they are going to happen,” says Paul Johnson, ISA Board Certified Master Arborist® and Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator at Texas A&M Forest Service in Austin. “With planning we can lessen the impact of these disasters.”

“When Texas was hit with severe wildfires in 2011 and 2012, we didn’t have enough people to handle the situation,” adds Johnson. “For that reason, we are working with ISA Texas on a special credential for arborists to assess properties for fire prevention methods before an outbreak occurs.”

Not all trees are lost to fire. They can adapt to conditions, especially in areas where wildfires are common.

“Hardwood and pine trees will fully recover if there is normal rainfall following the fire and if the roots, stems, and buds in the crown have not been injured,” says Jim Skiera, ISA Executive Director. “If the vascular tissue in the roots, the stem, or the crown has significant damage, it will kill the tree.”

In the meantime, property owners should be patient.

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For More Information

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“Let the tree tell you if it will make it or not,” says Cortese. “Beware of the guy who knocks on the door recommending tree removal right now. Choose a person or company who is an ISA Certified Arborist® or Board Certified Master Arborist®, and ask to see their worker’s compensation and liability insurance up front. Homeowners should ask the tree service representative to have their insurance company send them a “Certificate of Insurance.” Don’t get ripped off when we don’t yet know if the tree is dead or alive.”

ISA Certified Arborists® are skilled in tree risk assessment of fire damaged trees and much more. To find one who is ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified in your area, visit www.treesaregood.org.

About ISA

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., U.S., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research and education around the world. To promote the importance of arboriculture, ISA manages the consumer education web site, www.treesaregood.org, which fulfills the association’s mission to help educate the public about the importance and value of proper tree care. Also, as part of ISA’s dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information on ISA and Certified Arborists, visit www.isa-arbor.com.



International Society of Arboriculture

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