Either wind alone or in combination with sleet or packed drifted snow can break down trees and shrubs. The March, 1966, blizzard did a tremendous amount of damage to all kinds of trees, and especially to evergreens.

What do you do with storm damaged trees? Generally speaking, LEAVE THESE TREES WHERE THEY ARE. In evergreens, if the break is above a whorl or two of branches, or two or more inches above the graft in the case of grafted trees, the trees can be repaired so they will grow to about the same shape as they were originally.

**EVERGREENS**

The upright forms of pine, spruce and cedar can be repaired so that in a few years they will be almost as good as before the storm.

**Broken Tops**

Where the top was not entirely broken off, it is possible to straighten out the tree and splint it to keep the broken ends tightly together until they grow together once more. The results are very similar to top grafting.

When the top is broken out entirely, a new leader must be selected and trained. Fig. 1 shows a spruce as it was before the storm damage, while Fig. 2 shows the tree after the storm broke out the top. Examine the broken tree and select the best formed vigorous branch. Remove all competing branches that interfere with the selected branch. Now bend this selected branch upward so that it assumes a more vertical position. Stake, prop or tie this branch in an upright position (Fig. 3). Be careful not to overdo it, and break it. After a few years it will grow out so that in most cases only careful examination will show that the tree was damaged (Fig. 4).
HARDWOODS

Prune out the broken and mutilated branches to an undamaged or little damaged branch. Bend this branch as much as it will give toward a vertical position (see drawing). Tie it or stake it in this position. Treat the large tree wounds (those larger than 2 inches in diameter) with a wound dressing such as water emulsion asphalt (available at paint stores and lumber yards), orange shellac (at paint stores) or most any commercial tree wound dressing available at your garden center. Let nature do the rest.

Because a tree is broken off near the ground level, it doesn’t mean you have lost it. Most hard woods sprout easily and vigorously, and will soon replace the broken tree. If you want only one stem, thin out the excess sprouts.

STRIPPED TREE TRUNKS

Where the terminal growth is still intact, but the side branches are stripped off, there isn’t much that can be done, and often very little need be done.

Cut out broken or mutilated branches. Make the cut at a branch junction or at the tree trunk.

If the stripped area is under 3 feet, the future development of existing branches will cover this open area in a few years. For longer areas, spruce and juniper often will grow out new branches from adventitious buds on the trunk to help fill in the gap. Under some conditions you may have to reduce top growth by pruning to allow the side growth to catch up.

Original tree

Top broken out

A new top pulled into place

Stake with branch tied to it