

Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County News February 8, 2021

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Prepare Your Yard Now for Hurricane Season

Even though hurricane season is months away, preparing now can help minimize property damage and make our communities safer. The Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County (SWA) strongly encourages residents to implement a year-round yard maintenance program.

Major storms can leave behind incredible amounts of debris. For example, after Hurricane Irma, almost 3 million cubic yards of vegetative debris was collected. It took three months and cost more than \$39 million to collect and dispose of it all. You can help minimize the potential for vegetative debris by starting your hurricane trimming now. The SWA contract for unincorporated Palm Beach County residents allows them to place a maximum of 6 cubic yards of yard waste at the curb each week for pick-up. (Check out our short [video](#) for an example of what six cubic yards looks like.) Starting now allows for plenty of time for yard waste to be safely removed so you aren't stuck with it in the event of a storm. Hurricane season starts June 1, and once a storm threatens, it's too late to trim trees.

Here are some tips to ensure your yard is as prepared as possible:

- Cut back all trees and weak branches that could come in contact with buildings.
- Have foliage thinned so wind can flow freely through branches, decreasing the chance that trees or plants will be uprooted.
- Contain small pieces of vegetation, such as pine needles, leaves and twigs, in bags or cans that weigh less than 50 lbs. when full and place at the curb on your scheduled pick-up day.
- Clean your yard of any items that could pose a danger to you or your neighbor's property in hurricane-force winds, such as old lumber, broken lawn furniture, etc. Unincorporated Palm Beach County residents can place these types of items (three per week) curbside on their bulk waste collection day (if you're not sure what day that is, you can find it by entering your address on the [My Pick-Up Days](#) page). Please note that lumber must be placed in a container weighing no more than 50 lbs., and fence materials will not be collected in unincorporated Palm Beach County.
- Place yard waste from routine maintenance at the curb on your regularly scheduled collection day. Residents in unincorporated Palm Beach County may place a maximum of 6 cubic yards – equivalent to 3 standard size refrigerators – at the curb each week. (Vegetation cannot exceed 6 in. in diameter, 6 ft. in length or 50 lbs. in weight.)
NOTE: Unincorporated Palm Beach County residents who place more than the permitted 6 cubic yards of yard waste at the curb will have no portion of the waste removed. The pile will be tagged, and the resident will be responsible for removing all of the material at their own cost.

Residents living within city, village or town limits should contact their local municipality for their collection guidelines. Check the SWA [website](#) for municipal contact information.

Whether you maintain your yard yourself or you use a lawn care or landscape service, if you produce significant yard waste, consider requesting a price to remove the yard waste if it exceeds the 6 cubic yard limit. Excess debris from major cutting or tree removal will need to be properly transported and disposed of, and there is a fee for disposal.

The SWA offers [hurricane information](#) to help residents understand best practices for preparedness and what the SWA prioritizes after a storm passes. For additional information on debris collection in unincorporated parts of the county, contact SWA Customer Information Services at 561-697-2700 or 866-792-4636 (toll-free), or visit [SWA.org/Hurricane](#).

Additional Hurricane-Related Resources from Palm Beach County:

- [Proper Pruning Techniques](#) (Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning & Building Department)
- [Routine Tree Maintenance](#) (Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension)
- [Assessing Damage and Restoring Trees After a Hurricane](#) (Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension)
- [Evaluating Horticultural Professionals' Licenses and Credentials](#) (Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension)
- [Hiring a Contractor for Lawn Services](#) (Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning & Building Department)

In the event of a hurricane, official safety information can be found through the [Palm Beach County Division of Emergency Management](#).

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The Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County is a Dependent Special District that was created by the Florida Legislature in 1975. Since then, the SWA has developed an award-winning integrated solid waste management system to handle the county's waste and recyclables. We call ourselves AWAY: whether you throw it, recycle it or flush it AWAY, we put your waste to work. Each year, we:

- Process almost 100,000 tons of [recyclables](#) each year
- Burn approximately 1.8 million tons of trash each year to generate electricity at [renewable energy facilities](#)
- Produce enough electricity to power approximately 74,000 homes, about the number of homes in Boca Raton and Palm Beach Gardens
- Recycle more than 150,000 tons of [wastewater treatment residuals](#) (sludge from flushes) into environmentally-friendly fertilizer
- Safely dispose of more than 4.0 million pounds of [home hazards](#) a year
- Collect water off of the roofs of [Renewable Energy Facility 2](#) and store it in a 2 million gallon cistern, which is used as part of the energy making process

With the recent changes to the SWA's website, anyone can now sign up to receive SWA news, calendar updates, jobs, or other Web postings of interest by [signing up online](#). Should you sign up online to receive SWA's news releases, we can remove you from this distribution by sending a REMOVE reply to this email.



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