FYN Topic: Dead Tree Snags

Question: Are dead tree snags hazardous to a neighborhood? My lot next door has a dead pine tree that has not been removed. Emily, Cape Coral

Answer: Dead tree and palm snags are usually left in wooded areas to increase bird and other wildlife habitat. The top of dead trees in your yard can be cut to a lower, more stable size and left for vines to climb like Virginia creeper. A tall tree snag in a firewise landscape would be at a minimum distance of 30 feet or more from any structure. In place of a snag, consider using bird and bat boxes fastened to live trees. I do recall, several years ago in the Cape, damage occurred to houses and cars in one neighborhood after a dead tree was struck by lightning and exploded on impact.

Useful Links

http://www.floridayards.org
http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/
http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml
http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml.