Stephen H. Brown, Horticulture Agent
Lee County Extension, Fort Myers, Florida
(239) 533-7513 brownsh@ufl.edu
Lyle Buss, UF, Gainesville
http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/GardenHome.shtml

Norfolk Island Pine Recovery from Hurricane Charley

With maximum sustained winds of 150 mph, Hurricane Charley roared through southwest Florida on the 13th of August, 2004. The Category 4 storm devastated many trees including Norfolk Island Pines. Several months after the storm, Lee County Extension continued to receive many calls on the prognosis for recovery of Norfolk Island pines. The branches of the worst affected trees were completely stripped from their trunks. Some trees have made good recoveries and some will never recover. Here are answers to the question posed in 2004. This is a photo essay of some of those affected trees.

Pine Island, 22 December, 2004

Pine Island, 2 May, 2011

The trunk at the top of the tree below was broken in the hurricane. No new growth has emerged from this tree above the point of severance.

Looking west, Captiva, 25 August, 2004

Same tree, Looking east, Captiva, 4 May, 2011.

Severance point of same tree, Captiva, 25 August, 2004

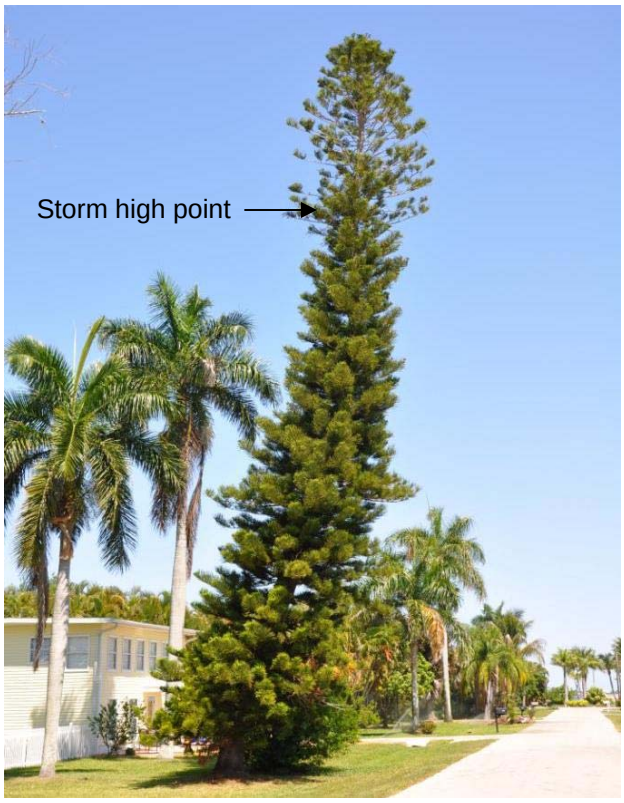
Sanibel, August, 2004

Sanibel, August, 2005

Sanibel, November, 2007

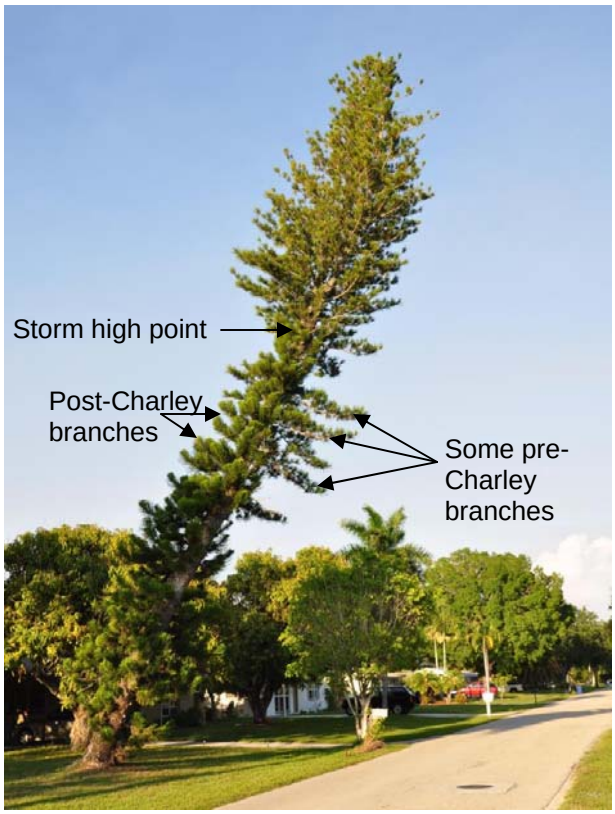
Sanibel, February, 2011

More commonly, damaged trees recovered with the new branches on the stripped (pre Charley) trunks being shorter and thicker than the new branches on the upper trunks. The latter formed after the hurricane; thus establishing a clear demarcation point between pre and post hurricane growth. The point of demarcation I've termed the "storm high point."

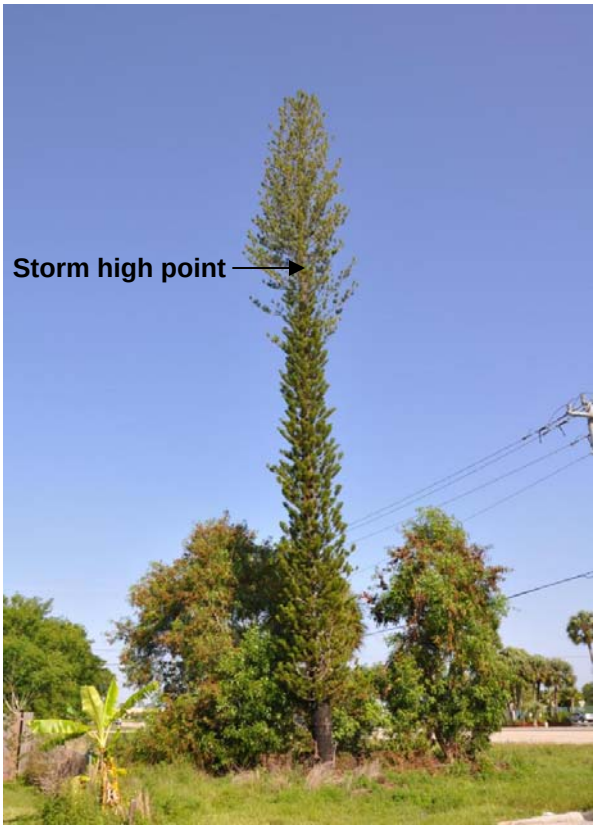


Near the Iona area, Lee County, 22 April, 2011

Fort Myers, 23 January, 2011



Fort Myers, 27 April, 2011



Cape Coral, 2 May, 2011

Normal appearing tree, minimal storm affect, Fort Myers, 2 January, 2010

Normal appearing tree, minimal storm affect, South Lee County, 22 April, 2011

All pictures taken by Stephen H. Brown

Click here for power point on recovery of royal palms from Hurricane Charley.

Click here for a fact sheet on 70 small trees for the Gardens and Landscapes of south Florida. Many pictures included.

Click here for the library of fact sheets on South Florida native plants.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, martial status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. 2/2011.