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Green Girl: After a hurricane, don't forget to go green

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After a hurricane, the last thing on our minds is how to clean up with sustainability in mind. We're too busy fanning ourselves while checking out real estate ads in hurricane-free spots like Ohio and Indiana.



Here are a few ways to stay green without going insane after a hurricane:



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Place all yard debris on the curb, not in a bag. For many people, their first instinct is to grab a large trash bag and start raking up leaves and small limbs. That's not necessary. The Solid Waste Authority collects yard debris and turns it into mulch and compost to be used for city and county landscaping. (They will give you free mulch anytime, but you have to go and get it.) However, scraps in large bags don't make the cut, so that's one less item on your hurricane prep list and one post hurricane chore you can do without.

- Recycle as much as possible. A lot of the metal debris you find after a storm is lightweight aluminum that can be recycled. Moreover, it may be worth money. Although you may not want the hassle of turning in a small amount for just a few dollars, there are metal scrappers that will be happy to come to you. If you have metal, especially aluminum debris after a storm, call a local metal scrapper. If they won't pick it up, they will direct you to someone who will.
- Touch up chipped paint with "green" paints! Use low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) or zero-VOC paint for those touch-ups.
- Go native when replacing downed trees, shrubs, and flowers. Look at downed hedges and trees as opportunities to go native. Native plants endure high winds better than non-native plants do because they have adapted to our tropical lifestyle by developing stronger, deeper roots. Even if they look

Bryan Norcross, perhaps the most well-known hurricane specialist in South Florida, has decided ...

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ragged after a storm, they tend to recover faster than exotic species. Talk to your local native nursery representative for plant suggestions. Some nurseries to try include Indian Trails, Mesozoic and Meadow Beauty.

Pine Jog does not endorse the products listed.

Supplemented by other staff members of Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach, in association with the College of Education, Florida Atlantic University. For more information, go to www.pinejog.fau.edu.

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