

**Gardener's  
Notebook**

# Now comes the pruning

By Carol Stocker  
GLOBE STAFF

Workers in the Back Bay usually go for a lunchtime stroll at this time of year to enjoy the pink and white magnolia blossoms that line Beacon Street. These magnolias are the Flintstones of flowers, primitive by evolutionary standards, dating back to the dinosaurs. And they're beloved by Bostonians as the flashiest, fleshiest, most tropical-looking flowers that will survive this far north.

But after the trees were trashed by this month's big storm, the scene was more magnolias-to-go than magnolias-on-view. Office workers and students such as Keith MacLelland of the Art Institute of Boston

snatched downed branches, which were in the heavy bud, to take home and revive in vases.

"Go ahead. Help yourself," said a glum Michael Palmer, building manager of the Commonwealth School, a private prep school on the corner of Dartmouth Street and Commonwealth Avenue, as he sawed away at what was left of the saucer magnolia that had anchored a beautiful front-stoop garden.

Eric Davis, an English teacher at the school, was upset, so he wrote an angry poem addressed to the storm, and read it aloud to students and faculty in the school cafeteria:

*If I find the muscular  
Jerk with a taste for buds  
Who tore apart our tree  
I will run him down  
And in one swift  
Operation  
Extract and chew upon  
Its pea-sized brain.*

Yup. He was mad. Davis explained his angst to a reporter thus: "I've been teaching here more than 20 years, and every spring I look at those young students coming into bloom and, beyond them, outside, is the magnolia coming into bloom. Then the students graduate, and they're gone. So every year it's different students, but always the same magnolia. The magnolias is what stayed."

And perhaps it will stay to bloom again. About a third of it  
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THE  
APRIL FOOL'S  
STORM LEFT  
HOMEOWNERS  
LOOKING FOR  
LESSONS ON  
HOW TO SAVE  
THEIR  
BATTERED  
TREES