



Falling Trees and the Integrity of Tree Root Systems

Generally speaking, trees with structurally sound root systems do not fall, except during very high wind events. When trying to determine which trees have root systems that are prone to failure, answers hinge upon which systems have been compromised by disease, construction, utility installation, irrigation lines, or, in the case of stream bank trees, have been undercut by erosion. Trees' root systems often extend a minimum 1.25 foot radius for every inch of trunk diameter measured four feet above the ground. Root flares, the point at which trunk tissue turn to root tissue, should be clearly visible above ground. The tree's root plate, that portion that supports the vertical weight of the tree, is at least 1/2 foot in radius for every inch of trunk diameter measured four feet above the ground (somewhat less for very large trees). The key to assessing structural root health is determining where your tree's root systems are "intact" and viable, with enough space for stability.

The question often put to arborists by homeowners is, "Which trees might fall on my house?" Well, they all "might," but the key issues are the likelihood and associated risks. The safe way to proceed is to contact a local certified arborist who does not work for a specific tree care company, who can look at your trees and render an opinion about their structural integrity. A knowledgeable decision about tree removal can then be made, based upon a sound, professional opinion.

How they grow.....

