

TREES & SEWER LINES

GETTING TO THE "ROOT" OF THE PROBLEM!

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Trees are often falsely accused of invading sewer lines and causing homeowners much grief. Normally, it is not the tree that is at fault. Most tree roots grow in the top 24-inches of the soil profile, well away from sewer lines. They like to grow in this upper soil strata because of more favorable moisture, oxygen, and nutrient levels.

Tree roots do not cause a problem until the sewer pipe breaks or its joints leak, oozing nutrients and water into the surrounding soil. Nearby roots then begin to thrive and grow rapidly. They can enter the defective pipe and eventually block the flow of sewage.

As proof of this, consider the fact that tree roots are rarely associated with water line problems, even though trees need water. The reason is because water lines are commonly made of metal or plastic and joined with materials designed not to break or leak. Sewer lines in older homes and commercial structures are made of clay tiles that are caulked around their joints. This differs greatly from newer construction practices that utilize plastic sewer piping with fluid-tight seams or joints. Clay piping and other like pipe materials are very fragile and eventually crack due to soil settling or earth tremors. When this happens, tree roots may enter the line.

Remember, tree roots generally invade sewer lines that are leaking! Repair of leaky pipes will save you water as well as sewer line damage in the future.

If you would like to obtain more information on living with trees, contact Our City Forest at (408)998-7337

