



## RIVER EDGE SHADE TREE

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### TREES & SEWER PIPES

This handout is to help educate homeowners about sewer and pipe repairs adjacent to curbside trees. The goal is to minimize any negative impact to the tree while resolving issues with sewers. We recognize that sewer problems are a traumatic and expensive problem that homeowners face when tree roots are found to be growing in a sewer pipe causing a blockage. There are many myths about how roots enter a pipe. The truth is that tree roots only grow where they can find oxygen, water and nutrients and are typically located in the top 12-18 inches of soil depending on the tree species, soil type and drainage. This usually out of reach of most sewer lines.

If a sewer pipe is defective, the roots may thrive due to an increase of nutrients and water leaching into the soil. As these roots grow rapidly and go down deeper into the rich soil, they may eventually enter the defective pipe and cause a blockage. It is noted that roots rarely enter water lines because these pipes are usually made of cast iron and are screwed together, minimizing the chance of leakage. Sewer lines are usually made of clay tiles that are glued together. This type of pipe is fragile and prone to cracks as the glue dries and soil settles.

#### How to prevent problems:

- Ensure proper construction of new sewer lines, including tight joints and a firm base soil compacted so it will settle evenly
- Repair or replace defective sewers. Repeated problems may indicate a collapsed or badly damaged pipe

If you do contact the Shade Tree Commission about issues with tree roots and sewers, we will come and evaluate the current condition of the tree. If the tree is in good condition, the recommendation to the homeowner will be to seek out repair of their sewer pipe. Please note the Commission selects species of trees that do not have typical rapid growth in order to minimize future conflicts. Removing a tree will not solve a faulty sewer pipe issue as the roots of the removed tree will still continue to grow for a time after the tree has been removed.

Please consult with the Shade Tree Commission  
if there are any concerns about a Borough tree. There is no fee for consultations

Thank-you for your support,  
**River Edge Shade Tree Commission**

Volunteers serving the trees of River Edge

[www.riveredgenj.org](http://www.riveredgenj.org)

**DONATIONS TO GO TOWARDS NEW TREE PLANTINGS IN TOWN CAN BE SENT TO THE SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

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