

Tree Removal Stump Removal And Pruning South East Melbourne Arborist Vegetation Management

Inspecting trees for pests and diseases

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Regular inspection of the trees will go a long way to ensure they are healthy. Trees are susceptible to a number of infections by micro-organisms, and environmental factors like wind, rain and extreme heat and cold can affect the health of a tree. Trees need to be inspected twice a year for any early symptoms of ill health - once during the winter and once in summer, as well as after severe storms.

Melbourne arborist James O'Brien of OB Trees has a decade of experience in vegetation management, and advocates for regular inspection of garden trees, "An assessment of a tree's general health should start from the ground up. At the roots, severed roots or signs of decay or fungi could indicate an infection. At the tree's root collar (the area of the trunk just above the soil) peeling or loose bark, cracks or deep slits are indicators to look out for.

Any signs of swelling, cavities, decaying wood or holes in the trunk are signs of possible ill-health. Dead or dying branches, odd-coloured or deformed leaves, cankers, dead sections of bark and leaning limbs or branches are all a cause for concern."

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One of these common tree pests and diseases could be responsible if trees are in decline:

Emerald ash borer - a beetle that affects all species of ash trees and bores into the bark, building tunnels throughout. The leaves of the tree turn yellow out of season and the branches die. If the infestation is detected early enough, the tree can be treated with insecticide but this is not always effective and the tree may need to be removed.

Cypress canker - there is no cure or prevention for this infection, which can be spread by rain, birds, insects, wind or pruning materials. The cankers present as sunken, red-tinged patches on the branches, the leaves turn yellow and the branches die quickly, sometimes overnight. Spores are released from circular black sporing structures, which appear alongside the canker.

The infection can spread to the entire tree and kill it if not caught quickly. If the tree is removed, it should not be replaced with another Cyprus as the new tree will be equally prone to infection.

Oak wilt - a fungus from the soil which is spread by beetles, this is a very fast acting infection that can kill a tree in as short a time as one growing season. Oak wilt most commonly spreads from one tree to another by root-to-root contact, making it a little easier to contain and control than other diseases.

The leaves of an affected tree will wilt and turn rust-coloured in the growing season when they should be green, with ensuing defoliation. Treatment for oak wilt is by trenching to sever root connections between live oaks, appropriate pruning and fungicide.

Root rot - another fungal infection that affects the roots through the soil. The fungus is present in pockets of soil but does not necessarily extend widely. Hence one tree may have root rot, and another one close by might not get infected. The first symptoms are wilted leaves in the growing season. Pruning of the damaged roots is prescribed to prevent the spread of the infection, and treatment needs to be done by a professional.

Anthracnose - this is a common fungal disease of shade trees, those most commonly and severely affected include ash, maple, white oak, sycamore, and walnut. Anthracnose also affects fruit trees. The fungus first appears on leaves as small irregular yellow, brown, or black spots, which can expand and merge to cover the whole leaf. Leaves may also become curled, distorted and fall off. If caught in time, the tree can be saved by cutting off and burning branches with infected foliage.

"Trees may even have green leaves and appear healthy but other symptoms could be indicators of underlying health issues. Assessing tree disease is the arborist's area of expertise and it's best to get a professional diagnosis if you suspect something is amiss.

A diseased tree can infect other trees and surrounding plants, so it's important to take action as soon as possible. An arborist will be able to assist in identifying the cause of the disease," says James.

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OB TREES Arborist and Vegetation Management Specialists service southeast Melbourne suburbs. And specialise in professional tree care, providing fast, simple solutions for all your pruning, horticultural and landscaping needs. The team are fully qualified, insured arborists with years of hands-on experience in everything from tree pruning, removal and preservation to hedge trimming, stump removal, risk management, vegetation

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For further information visit OB TREES Tree Removal, Arborist and Vegetation Management Specialists or call their friendly team on +61 435 912 457

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