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APPENDIX THIRTY

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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF TREE ROOTS CAUSE CRACKS IN MY DRIVEWAY OR DRAINS AND DOES IT MEAN THAT MY HOUSE WILL BE DAMAGED NEXT?

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Tree roots typically grow close to the surface, and it is not uncommon for them to develop on the underside of hard surfaces such as driveways, which can lead to cracks developing through physical pressure. This damage is frequently superficial, and there is a range of options available which include: do nothing; repair the cracks; remove the existing surface and replace with a new one engineered to accommodate the roots; prune the roots or remove the tree (the latter two subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) consent or conservation area notification if relevant).

Tree roots can cause problems by blocking drains. They do not usually cause the initial damage to the drain and will only enter drains which are already damaged and leaking. Therefore, if drains are watertight, roots should not normally affect them. If your drains are blocked by roots you will need a drainage company to assist. It is possible that the drains will require lining or replacing. Removing the tree seldom resolves the problem as the drain remains damaged and can leak (possibly causing foundation damage) or may be infiltrated by the roots of other plants unless the drain is repaired.

If your driveway or drains have been affected by roots, this does not necessarily mean that your house will be damaged next. Root damage to buildings is much rarer and is usually caused by subsidence: an entirely different mechanism to driveways and drains damage.

Further information:

- Tree Roots in the Built Environment 2006
(<http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp?FO=1160465&DI=341508>)(DCLG)
- Building Research Establishment publications
(<http://www.brebookshop.com/>)
- AA Registered Consultants (/Find-a-professional)
- More detailed information on TPOs:
www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Flowchart-1-Making-and-confirming-TPO (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#Flowchart-1-Making-and-confirming-TPO>)

Topics:

tree roots (/HELP-AND-ADVICE/Help-Advise-Search-Results-1?tagid=325), blocked drain (/HELP-AND-ADVICE/Help-Advise-Search-Results-1?tagid=365), driveway (/HELP-AND-ADVICE/Help-Advise-Search-Results-1?tagid=366), subsidence (/HELP-AND-ADVICE/Help-Advise-Search-Results-1?tagid=367), trees causing cracks (/HELP-AND-ADVICE/Help-Advise-Search-Results-1?tagid=368)

Other popular

Help and Advice Articles:

A brief guide to legislation for trees (/Help-Advice/Public/A-brief-guide-to-legislation-for-trees)

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Can I get my neighbour to cut back or reduce the height of their trees or hedge? (/Help-Advice/Public/Can-I-get-my-neighbour-to-cut-back-or-reduce-the-h)

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