

Eastmoreland Mature Tree Condition Rating System

Tree condition is characterized according to three attributes:

1. Where - location of sign or symptom of damage on the tree. Location is the beginning point for the condition rating process.
2. What - type of damage, which includes identifying signs and symptoms of damage.
3. How much - how severe is the damage. Record most severe damage seen.

Signs are physical evidence of the damaging agent, such as wounds, conks, punky wood, cracks, and broken branches.

- Wound is an opening or series of openings where bark has been removed or the inner wood has been exposed and no signs of advanced decay are present.
- Decay is degraded wood that has lost its structural strength; often stringy or punky.
- "Punky wood" is a sign of decay and is evidenced by soft, often moist, degraded tissue.
- Conks are the perennial fruiting body of wood-rooting fungi.
- Cavities are holes in the tree body. Cavities into the main bole that are oriented in such a way that they act as catchment basins for water are signs of decay.
- Root heaving is when roots are broken or pulled out of the ground by leaning tree.

Symptoms are the reaction of the tree to the damaging agent such as:

- Cankers (sunken, dead cortical material),
- Galls (swelling or outgrowth of tissue),
- Small and discolored foliage (determined by comparing to healthy tree of same species),
- Unbalanced crown (when large branches are on one side of the crown with large angles between branches).
- Co-dominant stems: 2 or more main stems (or "leaders") that are about the same diameter and emerge from the same location on the main trunk. Included bark is where the stems have grown together and compress the bark between them. A "V" union is more likely to fail than a "U".

The tree is examined from all sides starting with the roots and root collar. Damage signs and symptoms are prioritized (record the most severe damage seen), based on location in the following order:

1. roots, root collar and any root flare up to where bole begins,
2. bole of tree, from root collar up to base of tree crown (where large branches start),
3. branches and foliage in crown.

The ratings of the most severe damage in each location (0 to 3) are added together to yield the total tree condition rating.