

Do you have a Monster in Your Backyard?

Some trees are not suitable for planting near your sewer pipes.

Trees and shrubs play an important role in our daily life - they enhance the environment whilst providing shade, windbreaks and aesthetic value to any home. However some species are unsuitable for planting near your home's sewer pipes and Council sewer mains.

HOW DO TREE ROOTS DAMAGE PIPES?

Roots anchor and support trees, but they also seek and supply moisture and nutrients for continued growth. Roots normally extend around 1.5 times the length of an adult plant's branches. During dry periods, in particular, tree roots will search for any trace of moisture and nutrient, both of which can be found in sewer pipes.

Tree roots are very persistent and surprisingly strong, they will take advantage of any and every opportunity to get inside sewer pipes. Often this is achieved through small cracks or fractures, or through ill-fitting pipe joints.

Few people realise how aggressive the roots of certain trees and shrubs can be in their search for moisture. Tree roots start as fine fibrous feeding masses, with their 'tails' spreading long distances through the pipe, resulting in reduced flow rates and eventually complete blockages.

The degree of risk and damage caused by tree roots depends on the species concerned, its proximity to sewer pipes, and the composition of your sewer pipes (clay, pvc, etc).

WHERE ARE MY SEWER PIPES LOCATED?

Sewer and drainage lines are the most common victims of root intrusion. The problem affects both Bundaberg Regional Council and private property owners - causing great inconvenience and costs for both. Many people are unaware that Bundaberg Regional Council sewer mains run through residential properties, connecting up to the sewer pipes owned by homeowners.

The location of our mains and your pipes can be hard to identify without plans. Bundaberg Regional Council can provide you with a plan showing sewer mains on your property and also a corresponding plan showing where your sewer pipes are located.

Damage to sewer pipes and other structures can cause great expense and inconvenience to homeowners - repairing or replacing damaged sewer pipes can be very expensive. Once again PREVENTION is better than the cure.

WHAT CAN I PLANT NEAR SEWER PIPES?

The following three tables are a basic guide only - distances can vary depending on the type and condition of both the pipes and soil on your property. But remember that too far from a pipe is much better than too close. You should consult your local nursery if you still have concerns about planting a particular species.

PLANT AT LEAST 5 METRES AWAY FROM SEWER PIPES

Banksia	Lilac Chaste Tree
Baekea – all species	Mexican Hawthorn
Bleeding Heart Tree	Mock Orange
Escalonia – all varieties	Night Scented Jasmine
Gordonia	Orchid Tree Bauhinia
Grevillea	Rodeletia
Hakea	Skyflower / Duranta
Hawthorn / Maytree	Teatree
Karo	Wattle / Acacia
Lady of the Night	Yellow Throat

PLANT AT LEAST 10 METRES AWAY FROM SEWER PIPES

Almonds	Japanese Maple
Apricots	Jerusalem Thorn
Arizona Cypress	Judas Tree
Ash	Juniper
Barberry / Berberis	Kurrajong
Belah	Laburnum
Boobialla	Lilly Pilly
Camellia	Mealy Stringy Bark
Cherries	Monstera
Christmas Bush	Myrtle
Crepe Myrtle	Pampas Grass
Ebony Tree	Peaches
Fiddlewood	Plums
Flame Tree	Rose She Oak
Flowing Tamarisk	Saucer Magnolia
Frangipani	Silver Leaved Mountain
Hibiscus	Washington Thorn
Hybrid Flame Tree	Weeping Pittosporu
Irish Strawberry	Yorell

THESE SPECIES ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PLANTING

Athel Tree	Liquid Ambar
Bamboos	Magnolias
Bottlebrush / Callistemon	Mango Tree
Bougainvilleas	Oleander
Brush Box	Pepper Tree
Camphor Laurel	Pine
Canary Island or Date	Pineapple Guava
Ceanothus	Planes - all species
Chinese Hawthorn	Poinciana
Claret Ash	Poplars
Coral Trees	Privets
Desert or Caucasian Ash	Pyramid Tree

Elms	Rhus Trees & Scrubs
Eucalyptus / Gum	Robur Banksia
Evergreen Spindle Tree	Rubber Tree
False Acacia / Blacklocust	Silky Oak
Figs - all species	Tipu Tree
Firethorn	Umbrella Tree
Flowering Crabs & Apples	White Cedar
Hollies	Willow
Jacaranda	Wisteria

Please note that it is suggested that any species of plant is a potential threat to sewer pipes.

WHAT ABOUT TREES CAUSING PROBLEMS NOW?

Planting the right tree at the right distance will ensure that you don't experience damage to your sewer pipes. But what do you do about trees that may have begun to cause damage? Bundaberg Regional Council provides a service for removing tree roots causing blockages from sewer mains and your own pipes. There is a fee for this service. Contact the Bundaberg Regional Council Infrastructure Services, Water and Wastewater Operations and Maintenance for the relevant costs and assistance in providing this service. Please note that costs do vary between working hours and after hours.

This service provided by the Bundaberg Regional Council does not include the repair of homeowner's sewer pipes. A licensed plumber of your choice will be able to repair or replace the affected sewer pipes.

WHAT IF MY BLOCKAGE IS NOT CAUSED BY TREE ROOTS?

Tree roots are not the only cause of blockages in sewer pipes and Council sewer mains. The Bundaberg Regional Council has a corresponding brochure "Do You Have a Sewer Blockage on Your Property" that has helpful suggestions for preventing unnecessary blockages and guidelines in maintaining your owner sewer lines.

If you have any queries about any of the information presented in this brochure, please telephone Bundaberg Regional Council Infrastructure Services, Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Planning.