

We've probably all seen fractured footpaths where the roots from nearby trees have lifted the bitumen or concrete. If they're strong enough to do that, imagine what they can do to pipes.

The cost:

Repairing drain breakages and blockages from tree root invasion is a costly business. Wide Bay Water Corporation spends more than \$500,000 a year repairing sewers and removing tree roots – money that could be better spent on other services for ratepayers.



Roots blocking a pipe

The inconvenience:

Blocked drains cause plenty of inconvenience in the home. Sinks, baths and showers won't drain away and sometimes toilets won't flush. In extreme cases, blockages in the sewer system can cause sewage overflows in our yards, while blocked stormwater pipes can cause flooding.



When pipes are blocked on your property, that often means digging up your yard or under your house to find the problem and repair or replace the pipe – which not only disrupts your home life, but is time-consuming and costly.

“I have a problem tree – now what?”

Property owners are responsible for ensuring their plumbing is in good order – which means if a tree on your property causes a pipe blockage in either the sewerage or stormwater networks, you may be up for the cost of its repair.

Prevention is always better than cure. Even if you don't have a problem now – don't wait til it's too late. If you think you may have a problem tree, get advice now.

Wide Bay Water Corporation is your first port of call for any concerns about the sewerage system.

If you think a tree on your property may cause problems for the pipe network, or have further questions about your drainage systems and the location of trees, call 4197 4197 and ask to speak to the Operations Room.

In emergencies, Wide Bay Water Corporation officers can come to your property to clear a blockage at the property owner's expense.

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SEWER BLOCKAGES: the root of the problem



HOW TO MAKE SURE YOUR TREES DON'T CAUSE PROBLEMS



Trees – friend and foe!

In the warm sub-tropical climate of Hervey Bay, trees are an important part of our lifestyle. They provide plenty of shade around our homes and gardens to keep us cool and let us spend time outdoors while protected from the penetrating sun.

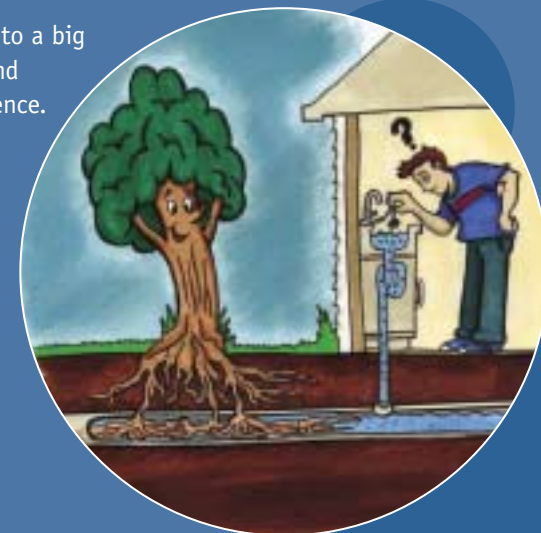
But these beautiful trees can also cause unpleasant and costly problems if planted incorrectly.

If your sinks won't drain away or your toilet is not flushing away properly – you may have a blockage in your drain. There are many ways pipes can become blocked – but often it's from the invasion of tree roots.

Most trees have an extensive root system that spreads beneath the ground providing a stable foundation on which to grow. But the roots are not just to provide support – they're the main way the tree gets its nutrients and water, especially in drier times when there's little rain to rely on.

Trees send out roots in search of any moisture they can find – that includes stormwater and sewage in our pipe systems. The tiniest crack in a pipe can give a tree the opportunity it needs. A root no bigger than a hair can slip into the crack and start growing – eventually blocking and/or splitting the pipe.

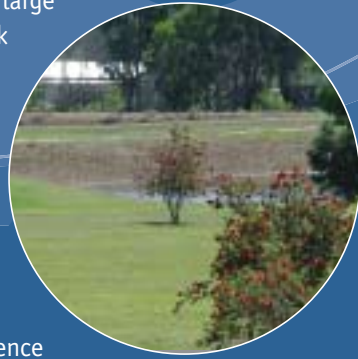
This leads to a big expense and inconvenience.



Getting it right from the start:

1. Choose your location carefully

Before planting trees or large bushes and shrubs, think about where you're going to put them. Do not plant close to drains or pipes – whether on your land, your neighbour's or bordering public/council land. Your tree will not take notice of fence lines in its search for moisture.



Drainage plans are available from Hervey Bay City Council, which will show you where the sewerage pipes are located on your property. At the very least, try to keep trees and shrubs 3.5 metres away from these pipes and other drains.

2. Choose your species carefully



Some tree species have rampant root systems that will spread long distances in search of moisture. For example, the roots of a poplar tree were found blocking a drain 30 metres from the actual tree – so it's important to

think about where your plant's roots might spread to in search of water.

Figs, rubber trees, large gum trees, willows and even mango trees are just some of the popular trees that can cause big problems in our pipes if they're planted in the wrong place.

What to do:

Before planting in your yard, draw up a general landscaping plan marking out the sewerage, stormwater and water pipes on your property and any neighbouring properties if possible. Identify the places you want shade, greenery, colour etc, and take the plan with you when you go to buy your plants.



Your local nursery should be able to advise you on the most appropriate plants for your garden and most importantly which trees and shrubs to avoid planting near pipes.

The lists on the next pages will give you an idea of the species most likely to cause problems if planted too close to pipes and drains. This is by no means a complete list, and should be viewed as a guide only.

Apart from your nursery, you can also obtain information from the Great Sandy Region Botanic Gardens – PH: 4125 9700

Problem plants:

Any plant has the potential to become a problem if located near drains and pipes. The following list is a rough guide to some of the biggest offenders.

WEED TREES:

- African Tulip Tree
- Camphor laurel
- Pepperina
- Tipuana
- Umbrella tree
- Weeping willow, pencil willow etc
- Spathodea campanulata*
- Cinnamomum camphorum*
- Schinus molle*
- Tipuana tipu*
- Schefflera actinophylla*
- Salix species*

FOOD TREES:

Citrus trees (orange, lemon etc) and the Prunus species (flowering almonds, plums, apricots, cherries, peaches) should be at least 3 metres from drainage.

Macadamia or Queensland nut, Mango and Mulberry trees should be 5-10 metres from drainage lines.

OTHER TREES:

These trees should not be planted within 10 metres of drains and pipes:

- Black bean
- Brush box
- Bunya pine
- Figs
- Gum trees
- Hackberry
- Hoop pine
- Jacaranda
- Norfolk Island pine
- Oaks
- Pine
- Plane trees
- Poinciana
- Poplars
- Sheoaks
- Silky oak
- Castanospermum australe*
- Lophostemon confertus*
- Araucaria bidwillii*
- Ficus species
- Eucalyptus species
- Celtis species
- Araucaria cunninghamii*
- Jacaranda mimosifolia*
- Araucaria heterophylla*
- Quercus species
- Pinus species
- Platanus species
- Delonix regia*
- Populus species
- Casuarina species
- Grevillia robusta*

These trees should not be planted within 3 metres of drains and pipes:

- Abelia
- Bamboo
- Banksia
- Bauhinia (shrub species)
- Bird-of-paradise
- Bottlebrush
- Bougainvillea
- Camellia
- Cassia (shrub species)
- Coral tree
- Crepe myrtle
- Flame tree
- Frangipani
- Grevillea (smaller species)
- Hibiscus
- Lasiandra
- Lilly pilly
- Liquidambar
- Oleander
- Pampas grass
- Paperbarks
- Pride of Bolivia tree
- Privet
- Rubber trees
- Tea-tree (smaller species)
- Wattles
- White cedar
- Wisteria
- Abelia species
- Phyllostachys species
- Banksia species
- Bauhinia species
- Strelitzia reginae*
- Callistemon species
- Bougainvillea species
- Camellia species
- Cassia species
- Erythrina species
- Lagerstroemia indica*
- Brachychiton acerifolium*
- Plumeria species
- Grevillea species
- Hibiscus species
- Tibouchina species
- Syzygium species
- Liquidambar styraciflua*
- Nerium oleander*
- Cortaderia selloana*
- Melaleuca species
- Tipuana speciosa*
- Ligustrum species
- Ficus elastica*
- Leptospermum species
- Acacia species
- Melia azederach*
- Wisteria sinensis*