Protecting
Your Tree

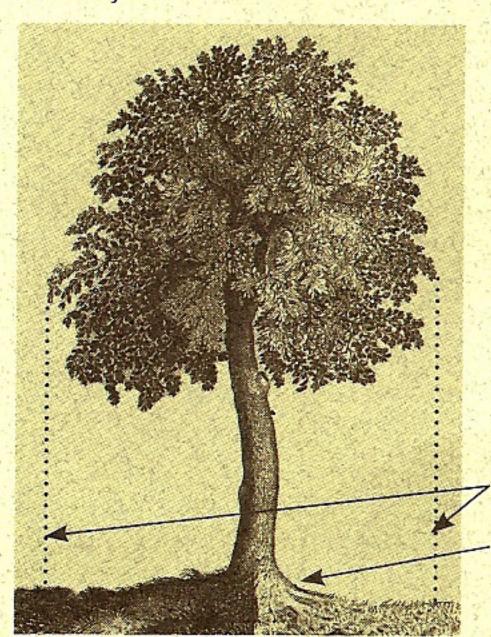
from
Fungus

What is root crown fungus and why should I be concerned about it?

Several species of parasite fungi live almost everywhere in Bay Area soils. Given the right conditions, such as consistent and excess moisture, these fungi will become active and begin to decay your tree. Unaddressed, fungus will cause long term decline and early death of your tree.

How do I protect my tree from fungus infection?

You need to be concerned when the root crown (also called the root flare) of your tree is wet, especially during warm weather. (The root crown is the area where the roots and the trunk meet.) This happens when the root crown is in a consistently wet environment, such as when there is soil or plant material surrounding the base of the tree. Root crown fungus dies when it is exposed to air. By making sure the root crown is dry and exposed to air, you will prolong the life of your tree.



The difference
between a buried
root crown (left
side) and a properly
exposed root
crown (right side)
is demonstrated in
this illustration.

DRIP LINE

There are three main ways to protect the root crown of your tree:

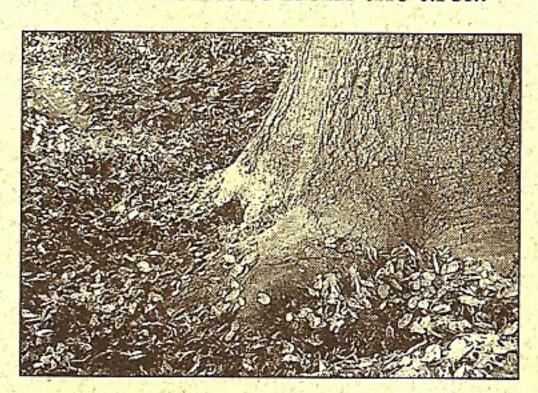
1. Remove competing plants, including ivy and lawn

These plants can hide defects such as areas of decay, and can trap moisture around the root crown, creating the perfect environment for fungus. Garbage collects under ivy and it creates a breeding ground for rats. Tips on how to remove ivy can be found on Canopy's

web site, www.canopy.org. Ideally all competing plants within the drip line will be removed. The drip line is the imaginary line from the farthest-out branches to the ground (see illustration). Laying mulch around the trunk, but leaving the root crown exposed, can help keep ivy and other plants from returning.

2. Remove built-up soil from around the root crown

Removing dirt until you can see the root crown may expose the fungus and will remove moisture from the area.



A properly exposed root crown should look like the one in this photograph

3. Water properly

Removing lawn inside the drip line of the tree will not only remove competing plants but will also help eliminate excess moisture. Do not water in or allow water to collect around the root flare. Do not allow sprinklers to spray on the trunk. Water away from the trunk, but still within the drip line.

How to have your tree evaluated for root crown infection:

Contact an ISA certified arborist or ASCA registered consulting arborist for an inspection. A professional, licensed and insured arborist should be consulted if the upper canopy of your tree shows signs of stress such as losing leaves, producing smaller leaves than normal or producing suckers on the trunk. An arborist should also be consulted if you see signs of decay in the wood or clusters of mushrooms growing from or next to the trunk.

Where can I find more information or a list of professional arborists?

Canopy's web site—www.canopy.org