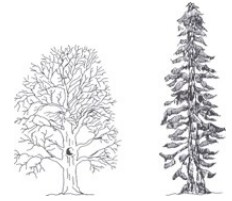


rowse tree services



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2011



The snow before Christmas has caused a lot of damage to trees in the area. Pines, Cupressus macrocarpa and Cedars suffering in particular and many Acacias dying as a result of the low temperatures.

Broken Branches:

The weight of the snow caused branches to be ripped off like the one on the right. The branch it pulled out from was reduced back and cabled. Although it was mostly coniferous trees that suffered we also had to work on deciduous trees, as shown below right. Some Acacia trees have been killed outright by the low temperatures, others in more sheltered spots have survived with just some leaf scorch. It will show up in the spring when everything starts greening



up what damage has been done. The odd hung up, broken branch will also show up better too. There is no need to use any sealant where the branches have been pulled out as the tree has its own defences against decay and as often as not the paints/sealants will be locking in fungi as locking it out. If, as on the Pine above, there is a long exposed branch it is advisable to prune back to lessen the weight and likelihood of breakage at a later date.

Trees On

Boundaries: If you are the owner of a tree on a boundary you are not bound to pay for work to the tree for your neighbour if you do not wish to do so. However, they may cut any branches or roots to their boundary and offer them back (this cannot be converted—for example into ash and scat-



tered over). This is not usually a satisfactory result for the tree as it may make it unsafe (another issue) so it is best to come to an agreement. If the tree is covered by a preservation order or is in a conservation area an application to carry out the work will need to be made.

Trees near roads :

Highways: If a tree or shrub overhangs the highway and is causing an obstruction the highway authority may serve a notice requiring branches to be cut back/removed. It is generally accepted to be 5.1m over the highway and 2.4m over a footpath. If the owner fails to comply, the Authority may do the work and charge the owner.

Duty of care: In recent years there has been an average of around six tree related deaths a year and always seem to make headline news, where as there are about ten deaths a day in traffic accidents. Trees are dynamic and lay down tension and compression wood to compensate for weight and wind loading. They also produce reaction wood in response to decay or structural weaknesses. In fact, trees have evolved to have excessive mechanical safety factors in order to cope with extreme weather conditions.

It is the tree owners responsibility to take reasonable measures to avoid causing foreseeable harm to others that is reasonably preventable. This depends on the size of the property and the expertise of the owner—a botanic garden would be expected to take greater care than an owner of a small garden. As a tree owner to fulfill your duty of care, a hazard risk assessment should be carried out. This means identifying areas of your property into risk zones based on levels of use and then looking at the size of the tree or part of the tree that may fail, the likelihood of failure and the target. So if your trees appear healthy and are in an area where nobody much goes this is a low risk, low target area. If, however, you have a large old tree overhanging a busy road that you can see has a large, dangling broken branch, for example, this is a large hazard in a high target area, causing an unacceptable risk. This is a foreseeable risk that you would be expected to do something about. If you check your trees regularly on an annual basis and if you are unsure of

the significance of a fungal fruiting body or other problem then that is when you should ask for help from somebody with the ability to identify tree hazards, assess levels of risk and make appropriate management decisions. As a rule of thumb large, old trees will need more checking than young vigorous trees – annually as opposed to every five years.

Light: there is no right in law to a view, however if your neighbour plants trees that will eventually block light from your windows it may be possible to take an injunction out to reduce/ restrain further growth.

Poisonous Trees: Some species such as Yew and Laburum are poisonous if parts like berries or leaves are eaten. These species should not be planted where they grow over the boundary (such as a hedge between a garden and field) and may be eaten by livestock, as the owner will be liable if the cattle die as a result. Children should be made aware of poisonous plants in gardens as the berries are often attractive and there is a liability as above.



Another picture of the snow in Colaton Raleigh.

Next Issue:

Pests and diseases.