BREAKTIME

University of California
Cooperative Extension

The Newsletter of the California Tree Failure Report Program
July 2000 - Vol. 11, No. 1

Report Count

There are 2,616 reports in the database. In 2000, we have received 118 reports, which is slightly better than average for this time of year. Please continue to report failures --- let's see if we can reach 3,000 by the end of the year. To help reach this goal, we will be giving priority registration for the Annual Meeting to those who submit 2 or more forms. For more information about this process, please see "Priority Registration".

Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars!!! The CTFRP Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, **January 11, 2001**, at the Filoli Center. Once again, this will be a one-day educational program focused on topics relevant to tree failures and hazardous tree assessment. Program and registration information will be mailed in the fall.

Priority Registration

Since the Annual Meeting is intended as an educational opportunity for CTFRP cooperators, we have initiated a "priority registration" program for individuals who submit two or more reports (between December 1, 1999 and December 1, 2000). This means that your registration will be immediately processed (upon receipt) if you have submitted at least two reports. A registration deadline for priority registrations will apply. Cities, organizations, and companies will be credited with one registration for every two reports (i.e., if your group submits 20 reports, you will be able to register 10 people).

Those who have not submitted 2 reports will be registered on an "as available" basis. Please keep in mind that for the past two years we exceeded our registration capacity and, therefore, had to decline registrations. Please ensure a place at the meeting by submitting your reports. **We want you there!!!**

Two Unfortunate Tree Failures

CTFRP cooperators alerted us to two tree failures which resulted in personal injuries. Ed Slowik (TREECO, Ventura, CA) submitted an article from an Ojai newspaper describing the failure of an oak which sent 10 people to the hospital on Memorial Day (5/29/00). A very large section (105 inches in circumference) of the tree failed during a family picnic in a courtyard at the World University of America in Ojai. All that was heard was a "creaking sound" and then it dropped. Decay was suggested as being the key defect leading to failure. The species was not identified.

Jerry Heverly (Oakland) passed along an article from the San Francisco Chronicle (6/20/00) describing the failure of an oak at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Menlo Park, CA, which killed a 73-year-old grandfather and injured his daughter. This incident also occurred during a family picnic --- this time on Fathers Day. The 60-foot tree apparently broke at ground level. The species was not identified and no explanation for the cause of failure was offered.

CTFRP Web Site

You may have noticed that our web site has not been accessible lately. It is in the process of being redesigned. We hope that the new site will become a "hub" for tree failure information. Options for entering and retrieving data proved to be too difficult to manage, so they will be eliminated for now. If you have any comments or ideas, please let us know.

Eucalyptus Failures

We have data reported on failures from 24 eucalyptus species. Fifteen of those are fewer than five reports each. The chart on the following page compares some data from branch failures in *Eucalyptus camaldulensis, E. globulus, E. sideroxylon and E. viminalis.*

Comparison of **BRANCH** failures in four most commonly reported eucalyptus species.

	E. camaldulensis red gum	*E. globulus* blue gum	*E. sideroxylon* red ironbark	*E. viminalis* manna gum
Number of failures	25	44	35	15
Mean branch diameter	8"	10"	6"	16"
Failed at attachment	14 (56%)	25 (57%)	18 (51%)	8 (53%)
Failed at 1-12'	10 (40%)	18 (41%)	15 (42)%	6 (40%)
Failed at 13-30'	1 (4%)	1 (2%)	2 (6%)	1 (6%)
Structural Defects				
Failed portion dead		1 (2%)		
Dense crown	3 (12%)	1 (2%)	4 (11%)	1 (6%)
Heavy lateral limb	7 (28%)	19 (43%)	11 (31%)	5 (3%)
Multiple branches	2 (8%)	7 (15%)		1 (6%)
Embedded bark	1 (4%)		8 (23%)	1 (6%)
Cracks/splits		1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (6%)
None	3 (12%)	5 (11%)	5 (14%)	1 (6%)
Pruning at location of failure				
None	22 (88%)	26 (59%)	20 (57%)	8 (53%)
Some	3 (12%)	14 (32%)	11 (31%)	6 (40%)
Age				
1 – 10			4 (11%)	
11 – 25	6 (24%)	3 (6%)	15 (42%)	
26 – 50	16 (64%)	12 (27%)	14 (40%)	3 (20%)
51 – 75	2 (8%)	13 (30%)		8 (53%)
76 – 100		10 (22%)		4 (26%)
Decay				
No decay	22 (88%)	30 (68%)	28 (80%)	5 (33%)
Some decay	2 (8%)	13 (30%)	7 (20%)	8 (53%)
Windspeed				
Less than 5 mph	3 (12%)	14 (32%)	3 (8%)	5 (33%)
5 – 25mph	3 (12%)	13 (30%)	11 (31%)	7 (46%)
Over 25mph	18 (72%)	12 (27%)	19 (54%)	3 (20%)
Precipitation				
None	8 (32%)	19 (43%)	16 (46%)	7 (46%)
Some	16 (64%)	22 (50%)	18 (51%)	8 (53%)

Notable numbers: 50% of red ironbark branches failed before the tree was 25 years old; 99% of manna gum branch failures happened after age 25 and 52% of blue gum branch failures happened in trees over 50 years old.

L.R. Costello

Laurence Costello
Environmental Horticulture Advisor

Katherine Jones

Katherine Jones
Horticulture Associate