

The Newsletter of the California Tree Failure Report Program  
September, 1996 - Vol. 7, No. 1



## ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JANUARY 9, 1997

Please mark your calendars for Thursday, January 9, 1997, for the CTFRP Annual Meeting. We have secured an excellent, new location for the '97 meeting at The Filoli Center in Woodside (San Mateo County). The facilities at their beautiful, new Visitor and Education Center will meet our needs superbly. In addition, being located in a mature oak woodland, we will have the opportunity to include field presentations on the program.

Details of the program and registration information will be sent to you in October. For now, please hold the date - **January 9, 1997**.

## WESTERN CHAPTER GRANT FOR CTFRP

With all previous research grant funds exhausted, the CTFRP was in desperate need of financial aid this year. Fortunately, the Western Chapter ISA came to the rescue providing a \$4,000 grant to continue operations. We are very grateful for this timely and generous support from the Western Chapter and sincerely thank all the officers, directors, and members. We are very hopeful that subsequent operating support will come entirely from registration fees collected at the Annual Meeting.

## KATHERINE JONES JOINS CTFRP AS PROGRAM MANAGER

In a big step forward for the CTFRP, Katherine Jones was hired on a part-time basis to serve as Program Manager. Katherine is a Horticulture Associate in the UC Cooperative Extension office in Half Moon Bay (San Mateo County) and has provided assistance for several years at our Annual Meetings. At this point she is very familiar with the CTFRP and will be your contact for all questions

and information requests 415/726-9059. In addition, Katherine will be maintaining the database and generating summary reports. We are very pleased to have her involved in the CTFRP - she will add much needed continuity in program operations.

## REPORT COUNT

There have been 2023 reports submitted through June 1996. (77 Genera, 170 Species)

*The following are the ten most frequently reported species:*

SPECIES	# OF REPORTS
1. Pinus radiata	297
2. Cupressus macrocarpa	278
3. Quercus agrifolia	161
4. Quercus lobata	93
5. Eucalyptus globulus	96
6. Pinus pinea	55
7. Eucalyptus sideroxylon	45
8. Acacia melanoxylon	40
9. Quercus kelloggii	37
10. Sequoia sempervirens	32

*The most frequently reported species in 1996 (2023 reports) are similar to those of 1993 (1216 reports).*

	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REPORTS	
	1993	1996
Pinus radiata	15%	14.7%
Cupressus macrocarpa	12%	13.8%
Quercus agrifolia	9%	8%
Quercus lobata	5%	4.6%

The following are the number of reports for some other commonly planted species:

SPECIES	# OF REPORTS
Acacia baileyana	15
Acer palmatum	2
Cedrus deodara	27
Eriobotrya japonica	7
Geijera parviflora	7
Liquidambar styraciflua	18
Magnolia grandiflora	4
Olea europea	4
Pistacia chinensis	8
Podocarpus gracilior	2
Pyrus calleryana	25
Robinia idahoensis	2
Schinus molle	6

Reports have come in from 57 California counties. More than half are from San Francisco Bay Area counties.

COUNTY	# OF REPORTS
Alameda	193
Contra Costa	91
Marin	32
Napa	36
San Francisco	770
San Mateo	157
Santa Clara	181
Solano	9
Sonoma	65

Here is a look at the number of failures reported per year since 1987.

YEAR	# OF FAILURES REPORTED
1996 (through June)	40
1995	447
1994	172
1993	368
1992	225
1991	221
1990	136
1989	67
1988	185
1987	97

## AN INTERNATIONAL TREE FAILURE REPORT PROGRAM?

It could happen! On May 15, 1996, thirteen individuals from around the country met in San Francisco to discuss the possibility of creating an international program. Included were representatives from forested recreation areas as well as from all sectors of arboriculture (municipal, commercial, utility, and academic.) A plan for future work was developed amid an atmosphere of high interest and optimism. We'll keep you posted on developments. If you would like more information about this meeting, contact Larry 415/726-9059, Alison 916/752-7683, or Nelda Matheny 510/484-0211.

### SUMMARIES FOR SELECTED DATA GROUPS (2,023 reports as of June 1996)

Note: in some cases reports are not complete, so numbers do not total 2023 for all categories.

**LOCATION OF FAILURE.** Branch failures continue to be most frequent, followed by roots and trunks, respectively.

**STRUCTURAL DEFECTS.** Heavy lateral limbs is the most frequently reported structural defect type. This is likely a consequence of the large number of Monterey pine reports in the database. Multiple trunks and multiple branches are similar failure types and, when combined, they represent the second largest defect class (366). Both heavy lateral limbs and multiple trunks/branches are defects which can be reduced or eliminated by pruning.

## SUDDEN LIMB DROP SURVEY

Sudden limb drop has been frequently observed by California arborists. Of 68 responses to a recent survey (1996), 58 (85%) indicated they had observed sudden limb drop, while 10 (15%) had not seen the problem or were not sure.

Eucalyptus was the most commonly reported genus (37 reports), with globulus, sideroxylon, and polyanthemos being the most frequently named species. Oaks were reported 26 times, led by lobata, kelloggii, and agrifolia. Among conifers, pines (10), cedars (3), and Douglas fir (2) were named more than once, while deciduous hardwoods were led by Liquidambar (7), Ulmus (5), Platanus (4), Pyrus (2), and Fraxinus (2). Thirteen other species were mentioned once. Except for Douglas fir, all of these are mentioned by Harris in *Arboriculture - Integrated Management of Trees, Shrubs, and Vines* (2nd Edition, p. 464). Since population sizes are not known, the relative frequency of occurrence of sudden limb drop among genera cannot be determined from this survey.

Most reports came from coastal areas (36), followed by the central valley (14), foothills (13), interior mountains (1), and desert (2). This distribution indicates that sudden limb drop has been observed in diverse areas of California, but should not be interpreted as evidence that the frequency of occurrence is greater in one area over another.

Most respondents felt that sudden limb drop incidence (in the last 2 years) had remained the same (53%), while some thought it had increased (22%), others were not sure (15%), and some felt it decreased (10%). This result suggests that a distinct trend towards an increase or decrease in sudden limb drop incidence was not evident.

**Please continue to send in your reports! Just 2 reports each will add substantially to the database. If you need more forms or envelopes, call Katherine Jones at:  
(415) 726-9059  
Mondays and Thursdays**

**SITES.** Most of the failures reported occur in parks (820), on residential property (483), or along streets (222). Schools (151) should not be overlooked as a high priority tree inspection location.

**MONTHS.** November to March is the period when failures are most frequent in this area. In areas dominated by deciduous species, however, this distribution will change substantially.

**AGE.** It is not just old trees that fail. Over half the failures in the database are for trees less than 50 years old.