

Massaria Inspection Report

Montpelier Square
Westminster
London
SW7 1JY



Client : Neil Carthy
Date : 20/11/2011
Ref : 12/519
Surveyor : KM/JM

Keith Macgregor Dip Arb (RFS), M Arbor A
Arboriculturist

Edward Cottage
Leslie Road
Dorking
Surrey
RH4 1PW

01306 640561

info@arbconsultancy.co.uk

07971 121948

1 INSPECTION DETAILS AND RESULTS

In line with the recommendations of my report dated 17/05/2013 the plane trees within the square were inspected for any evidence of Massaria disease.

Extract from original report:

Tree Number	Species	Recommended Works	Priority	Reason
1, 18, 22, 25, 33, 41, 42	London Plane	Inspect for Massaria disease; treat as prescribed - see recommendations	3 mths	Massaria Disease - See Appendix 1

The trees were climbed by Tim George Tree Services and no Massaria was found.

2 FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the nature of the disease and its rapid onset and that the current guidance is for tri-annual inspections (3 times a year) I must recommend that the trees are inspected again within 4 months of this inspection.

However, there should be scope to reduce the frequency of inspections in the future should the trees continue to be free from the disease.

3 TREE LOCATION PLAN



4 APPENDIX 1 – Massaria Disease

The London Plane (*Platanus x hispanica*) is commonly planted in London and is prized for both its amenity value and its tolerance to urban conditions including soil compaction, restricted rooting, drought, intensive pruning and air pollution.

This species of tree is however subject to infection by a species of fungus called *Splanchnonema platani*, more commonly referred to as Massaria Disease of Plane [MDP]. Historically this fungus was viewed as being common only in the 'warmer Mediterranean climates and southern United States' where it acted as a 'weak parasite ... only capable of causing minor damage.' First discovered in England in 2003 it caused no significant problems until 2009 when it was associated with branch failures on Plane trees within the Royal Parks in London.

MDP is a fungus that occurs naturally in Plane trees which, capable of lying dormant until conditions are suitable, has the capacity to kill both the bark and cambium on twigs and branches. On smaller branches, up to 150mm diameter, the infected branch may be killed within a year whilst on larger branches infection may result in a strip of dead bark on its upper surface, something that is difficult to identify from the ground.

In some instances MDP has been associated with the failure of infected branches. Branches can decay rapidly and failure may occur within as little as four months. Infected branches may therefore pose a risk to persons and property unless identified and dealt with accordingly.

Research into MDP is on going although it is known that it generally affects Plane trees over 40 years of age, occurs most frequently on shaded lower branches and is typically not seen on pollarded specimens. Incidence of the disease is thought to be influenced by factors such as drought, soil rooting volume and tree health.

Should MDP be found on a Plane tree then expert professional advice should be sought. The disease will not kill the tree but may result in it shedding twigs or branches with obvious implications for health and safety. Infected trees should be assessed in relation to the risk that they pose, and appropriate steps taken to ensure that this is reduced to acceptable levels.

Where possible Plane trees should be managed in a manner that promotes health and vitality. Particular attention should be paid to reducing moisture stress through irrigation, environmental improvement and moisture retention.

It is, as yet, too early to determine the long-term implications of this disease for the London Plane. Trees should however be inspected frequently and, where branches are found that pose a risk to people or property then they should be dealt with in a manner that gives appropriate weight to both public safety and tree health.

Any pruning of infected trees should be carried out with due regard to bio-security. All tools and equipment should be disinfected on completion of the job and all arisings must be dealt with in a manner that avoids spreading any spores that may be present.