

established 1938

# National Arborist Association

Dedicated to the Advancement of Commercial Tree Care Businesses

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***For immediate release***

## Mushrooms on or near trees could signal problems

It's a good idea to inspect your trees completely from the ground up to be sure they are healthy and strong. You also want to be sure your tree does not pose a risk to yourself or your property. Robert Rouse, staff arborist at the National Arborist Association, recommends hiring a qualified arborist to do this work. "A qualified arborist can recognize problems that might not be obvious and evaluate their potential for causing harm," Rouse says. He lists some common signs of trouble that arborists look out for:

### Roots

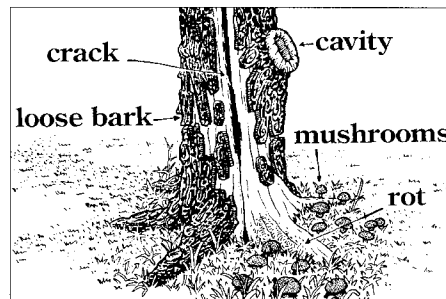
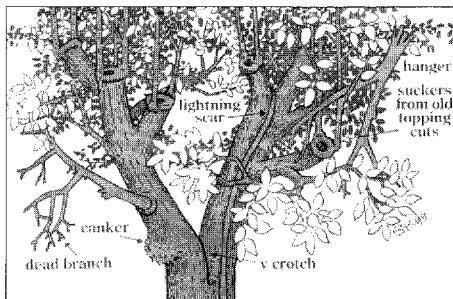
All trees need a substantial root system to keep them standing. However, only a tiny portion of the root system is visible above the soil surface. Trees should have a flare at the base. If this is not present, soil or mulch may be hiding symptoms of decay in the stem or roots.

Many symptoms on or above the buttress or flare roots can give an indication of the condition of the rest of the root system. Any root decay visible near the trunk could indicate extensive root loss, because decay begins in outer sections of roots and works back toward the trunk.

Fungus structures, including mushrooms and conks, indicate decay. The arborist might even probe the roots or trunk with sophisticated equipment to determine the presence and extent of decay. Before going to more sophisticated lengths, the arborist might simply *sound* the tree by hitting the roots or trunk with a rubber mallet to discover any internal decay. In either case, the arborist uses extensive experience to make judgements about the condition of the tree.

### Stem

The lower stem is the area between ground level and four feet above ground. It is the easiest portion of the tree to examine. Defects found here may indicate either a root or stem problem. The arborist will look for loose bark, open cavities, cracks, mushrooms, conks, and depressions or swellings in the stem. These can indicate a serious trunk or root decay. Here are some common problems that cause risks:



### Hire a tree care professional

The best advice is to hire a tree care professional with the experience, expertise and equipment to safely plant any size of tree. Require proof of liability insurance. For a list of professional arborists in your area, contact the National Arborist Association, 1-800-733-2622 or by a zip code search on the NAA's Web site: [www.natlarb.com](http://www.natlarb.com). The NAA is a 64-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture. Its more than 2,800 members all recognize stringent safety and performance standards, and are required to carry liability insurance.

*If you would like additional information or digital photos of proper tree care practices, please contact [Garvin@natlarb.com](mailto:Garvin@natlarb.com)*