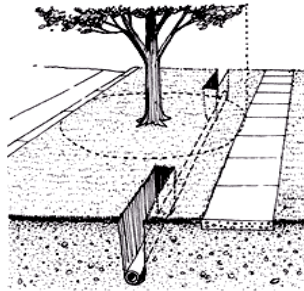


Managing the Urban Forest

The Georgia Forestry Commission defines an urban forest as, “the collection of trees in and around our communities.” The urban forest is managed to achieve goals and objectives, just as any other natural resource. The challenge in an urban setting is that the resource managers (decision makers) within a given area are often too numerous to fit into one room and the ideas, goals, and objectives held by each one are extremely variable. Despite what many may think, the situation is not hopeless! Progress can be achieved when decision makers have the information they need to make informed decisions regarding trees at or near project sites.

Trees often experience significant damage from activities at or around their critical root zone due to construction projects or water line installations. When lateral roots are severed, one can expect a weakening and subsequent decline of the canopy. These damaged trees often become more susceptible to insect damage and blow downs in high winds because overall vigor is in a state-of-decline and less roots are present to hold it in the ground on the trench side. Ideally, trenches should be dug outside of the drip line of trees. In situations where this is not possible the following options have been used with some success (Douglas L. Airhart & Guy Zimmerman III):

- trench directly toward the tree trunk, **but** tunnel under the tree trunk. In this fashion, you will minimize the number of severed roots.
- trench just one-third of the way into the drip line from either side, being sure to tunnel under the majority of lateral root system when connecting the trenches (see photo below)



http://www.tlcfortrees.info/what_will_damage_trees.htm

The majority of roots for a tree are located in the top 12” of soil where nutrients, water and oxygen are most available. Future root protection and good cultural practices can help injured trees recover and prevent major canopy failure in our urban forests.