

Visual tree assesment

The checklist presented here is intended as a guide and inspiration. It includes useful examples of things to look for during your Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). You should adapt the checklist to the situations you typically encounter as well as to the requirements of laws and regulations in your area. Safety first – always!

Start the inspection by approaching the tree. Examine the tree in this order: the crown; the root zone; and the trunk. When felling a tree from the ground, see the additional checklist below. Complete the checklist and take notes. *If the answer is yes, decide on how it impacts your work plan – but only if you feel confident that the work can be performed safely.*

CROWN

	YES	NO
Hangers or lodged branches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dead or weak branches?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weak branch attachments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cracks/splits along stem, branch/branch attachment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asymmetrical crown?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interference with other trees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animals, bird nests, etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ROOT ZONE

Weakening in the tree's anchoring in the ground?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mushrooms at the tree base?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cracks near root flare?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of root flare?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil mounding or compaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suspected root damage from vehicles or machines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suspected changes in the ground due to earthworks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YES NO

Windblown/uprooted tree?

If yes:

Lean of the uprooted section?

Loose rocks in uprooted section?

Tension in the tree trunk?

Other trees affected by the uprooted part?

Frozen ground: will the uprooted part fall back once cut?

Other trees (large or small) affected by the fallen tree?

Rough terrain: slopes, rocks, holes, wet/muddy areas, etc?

TRUNK

Signs of decay?

Mushrooms on the trunk?

Cracks and cavities?

Loose bark?

Swelling or depressions?

Clambering plants?

Insect infestation?

CHECKLIST: FELLING THE TREE FROM THE GROUND

If the tree is to be felled from the ground, your Visual Tree Assessment should *also* include the following:

Tree height:

Tree reach:

Tree lean, direction:

Width of crown:

Estimated centre of gravity:

Species of tree:

Strong branches?

YES

NO

Note: can be offset due to an asymmetric crown.

Is your escape route obstructed by rocks, fences or buildings, etc?

YES

NO

Note: it is vital to have a clear escape route that is free from obstacles for a safe retreat.