

## **Uncovering Hidden Dangers in Trees**

By Deb Nelson Stoughton Tree Commission

Because many tree problems are associated with underground root disturbance, often times potential failure goes undetected. Therefore, it is important to be aware of above ground symptoms associated with root disturbance. Soil mounding, twig dieback, upper crown dead wood, and off-color or smaller-than-normal leaves are symptoms often associated with root problems.

There are many kinds of root problems to consider such as severing or paving over roots, raising or lowering the soil grade around the tree, parking or driving vehicles over the roots, or soil-borne pathogens that attack roots causing decay. Loss of roots can lead to an entire tree uprooting and falling over.

Immediate action should be taken if a tree is determined to have more than 40% root loss or if a leaning tree can also be associated with recent root lifting, soil movement, or soil mounding. Immediate excavation of roots should be done if mushrooms are found growing under or at the base of the tree. This is an advanced sign of decay and determining how many roots have rotted is important for decision making.