

The London Tree Officers Association (LTOA) constitutes the professional & technical voice for London's trees & woodlands. Its aim is to enhance the management of the Capital's trees. We hope that you find the LTOA website both interesting & informative. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, **please do not hesitate to contact us.**

## Massaria Disease of Plane

### LTOA & Arboricultural Association Position Statement



The LTOA Massaria Working Group (LTOA MWG) has been set up to look into the problem of Massaria Disease of Plane (MDP) and communicate its findings with a view to ensuring good management practice is maintained in order to safeguard all the benefits and contribution to the community derived from the Capital's London Planes.

MDP is a recent problem affecting the capital's London Plane trees, which, though not particularly harmful for tree health, causes branches to occasionally decline, die and fall. It is thought to be a host specific fungus that occurs naturally in Planes, in a latent (endophytic) form, with a soft rot decay developing in certain affected branches that can result in brittle fracture. It appears that the symptoms of MDP are first observed on small diameter branches and if moisture availability continues to decline it may affect larger diameter branches. Notably, the period between initial expression and eventual branch failure can be short. Therefore, the prevalence of MDP requires a high level of awareness, knowledge and effective management techniques to determine the appropriate action. This warrants collaboration, sharing of reliable information and production of guidance to ensure that public safety management is a balanced and proportionate response to a problem and not one that is risk-averse and over-reactive (see NTSG guidance).

The MWG will develop a guidance document for tree managers providing a balanced and proportionate response to the problem. Members of the LTOA MWG include Mike Turner (The Royal Parks), Chair, Neville Fay (Treework Environmental Practice) Jake Tibbetts (London Borough of Islington), Peter Holloway (Arboricultural Association), Patrick Prendergast (London Borough of Harrow), Neil Taylor (City of Westminster).

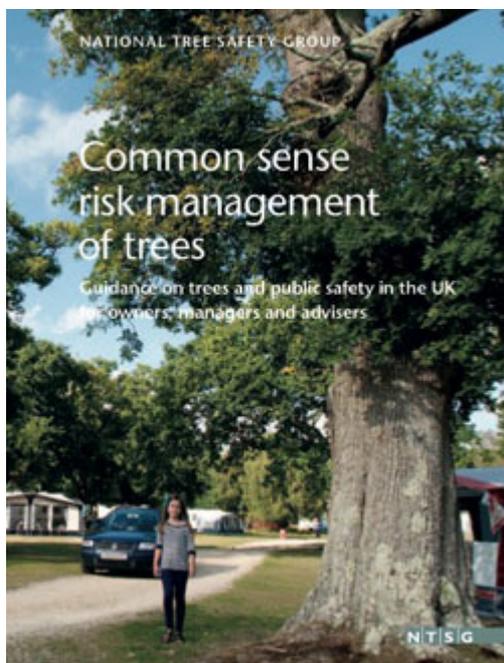
This Position Statement outlines the LTOA's stance to ensure that unnecessary and inappropriate intervention is avoided and that there is a measured and well-informed basis for managing and communicating the risks that may arise from MDP. The guidance document will aim to provide a framework for understanding the problem affecting London Planes, and for gathering and communicating evidence about the disease. This approach will

underpin the formulation of both short term and long-term management guidance, inspection protocols, and inform professionals involved in managing individual trees and populations of Plane trees. It will support community based and professionally interested stakeholders for the benefit of maintaining the public environmental, contribution to health and wellbeing of London's Plane tree population.

The LTOA MWG believes that the biggest risk posed to the London Plane tree population is from a disproportionate response to the problem, driven through fear of an over exaggerated perception of public safety risk. This is because the unnecessary pruning or felling of London's Plane trees would be significantly detrimental to both the tree and human populations of London.

**Read more: [Massaria Disease of Plane](#)**

## Common sense risk management of trees



At this time of year when many people are thinking of planting new trees The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) is launching its guidance on the common sense management of existing trees.

The NTSG is an exemplar of a broad partnership of government, the private sector and civil society working together effectively to a collective goal.

The guidance is quite simply an easy to use practical management tool. It helps large landowners and individual tree owners who wish to be reassured that they are fulfilling their duty of care to visitors and passersby alike. It provides sensible, clear and unambiguous practical advice in a way that is easy to read and can be interpreted to suit most, if not all, locations where trees grow. Locations ranging from trees in forests, woodlands and rural areas through institutional and commercial land to parks, gardens and domestic properties in urban areas.

The documents that will be available are:

1. Common sense risk management of trees (The main guidance document priced at £19.99 plus P&P)
2. A Landowner Summary (for estates and smallholdings available free)

### 3. Managing Trees for Safety (For the domestic tree owner available free)

This guidance has been produced over a period of three years following the commissioning of new research into trees and risk, extensive consultation on early drafts and considerable effort by the NTSG Drafting Group in drawing together all the various views, concerns and priorities expressed by the full NTSG membership.

Judith Webb Chair of the NTSG said:

“This suite of guidance documents brings together the best, generally accepted and balanced approach to managing risks from trees, whilst recognising the many benefits which they provide”.

“It has been an extraordinary journey bringing together arboriculturists and foresters, the public, private and charitable sectors, landowners and managers and the rural and the urban. What has been rewarding and delightful has been the extent of common understanding born from a common love and knowledge of trees”.

All the guidance documents as hard copies or PDF downloads are now available from the Forestry Commission Publications website. There is a link available from the NTSG website so that interested parties can go straight to the relevant page.

[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B)

[www.ntsg.org.uk](http://www.ntsg.org.uk)

All press enquiries about the National Tree Safety Group guidance should be directed to:

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