# Root of the matter III

I hope you were able to check out the tree root photos last week on our website. If not, they are still up. Just click on the “Stump” heading where more articles, tips and other tree work related pictures are located. The eroding hillside where I captured those images provided an amazing opportunity to view some very tenacious root structures. Most tree roots I encounter however are in the urban setting like customers yards and questions about their characteristics are a daily occurrence. Most questions are related to the concern about tree roots getting into foundations, sewer lines and irrigation pipes. To properly answer I remind the property owner of the two main functions of roots as I did here last week. That is to anchor the tree in the soil and to deliver water and nutrients to the tree. Tree roots may vary on behavior depending on age of the tree and the species, but I usually return to those two basics functions to begin my response. The first question most people want to know is if their tree is to close to the house and will the roots damage the foundation. Most decent sized shade trees are planted with some forethought and are planted twelve or more feet away from any structure. Some smaller ornamental such as Japanese Maples and Flowering Dogwoods are much closer and pose no threat. Roots are not concrete seeking missiles bent on destruction. If the concrete foundation came first, the tree will most likely stay away from it as concrete leaches lime which raises the soil PH. Roots do not like this high PH environment including other toxic compounds in the concrete. Remember roots feed the tree so if the soil is averse to the uptake of water and minerals, they will do their best to grow parallel to the concrete. I have however recently seen two large shade trees with invasive root systems planted way to close to a foundation that had me concerned. Large roots were growing right along the concrete and I am sure some under it as they were being forced to anchor the tree in the limited space. (Remember the other major function of tree roots) I suggested these two trees be removed before the garage floor starts to crack (you can see a photo on our website under stumps).

More next week and as always. For further questions consultations and quotes give us a call today!