# Root of the Matter part V

Last week we addressed the concern with tree roots and concrete. This week I thought we could address the fears folks have with tree roots and irrigation lines. By irrigation lines, I am referring to any pipe from main water lines to small poly pipe for sprinklers. Remember the two main functions of roots again as we lead into this topic (transporting nutrients to the tree and anchoring the tree). Water pipes may leak at seams, joints, or cracks and roots will seek this moisture out. Larger cast iron water pipes and other metal water lines will sweat. This is simple condensation. Again, roots will seek this available moisture for the trees consumption, especially when no other source is provided for it. I was on a tree transplanting effort several years ago where a Sugar Maple was being moved and a new water line being replaced directly below it. I was consulting on the effort and made suggestions for an approximate three foot-deep but very wide dig. Shockingly, this tree had a tap like root that went straight down and wrapped itself around the old water line elbow at a depth of six feet just for the condensation. I have also seen roots travel in the trench of water lines and in fact of any utility line. This is especially true of hard compacted soil when new trenching means soft soil. When irrigated by sprinklers or just by nature, water will tend to run off the compacted soil and to the soil of the trenched area. This loose soil is just the environment roots need to establish themselves both for anchoring and providing water to the tree. In theory however, if pipes did not leak or perspire, tree roots have no idea water is being transported through them. That said, it is best to consider proper placement when planting a tree around existing current irrigation of any kind. Always give your trees proper moisture during the year so they are not forced to find it in the wrong places.

Roots vs sewer systems next week and as always, for further questions, quotes or consultations, give us a call today!