

## Hazardous Trees: Thirteen Questions to Ask

Dr. Alex Shigo of the U.S. Forest Service, provides us with the thirteen questions one should ask while surveying one's property for hazardous tree situations. According to Dr. Shigo, "Most tree hazards do not just happen. They are usually started by mistreatments by people. When a hazardous tree breaks, it may hurt not only people, but the tree hurts too, in the sense of wounds or mortality. Most tree hazards can be prevented by regular checkups and proper treatments by tree professionals."

1. *Target:* If the tree falls, will it hit cars, houses, power lines or people?
2. *Architecture:* Has the tree grown beyond its normal form into a dangerous form?
3. *History:* Has the tree lost large branches recently?
4. *Edge Tree:* Were neighboring trees cut away recently leaving tall trees at the edge?
5. *Dead Branches:* Are there dead tops or branches? Is the tree dead?
6. *Cracks:* Are there deep, open cracks in the trunk and branches?
7. *Crotch Cracks:* Are there deep, open cracks below the joining stems?
8. *Living Branches:* Do living branches bend abruptly upward or downward where tips of large branches were cut off — tipping?
9. *Topping:* Are large branches growing rapidly from topping cuts on large trees?
10. *Storm Injury:* Are there broken branches, split trunks, or injured roots? Are branches close to power lines?
11. *Root Rot:* Are there fungus fruit bodies — mushrooms — on the roots? Were the roots injured by construction?