



## **FAQ's Regarding Root Collar Excavation**

### **Why are root flares on my trees and shrubs important?**

- The area of the tree where the above ground parts of the tree meet the below ground parts of the tree is commonly referred to as the trunk flare or the root collar. A healthy root flare is expressed by a visible and gradual expansion of the trunk into the soil. It is at this juncture that the cell structure is morphing from stem tissue to root tissue requiring a lot of energy and gas exchange expended by the plant. An excess buildup of soil or mulch around this part of the plant can reduce gas exchange, promote rotting, cause increased disease susceptibility and reduce overall plant vigor

### **What causes insufficient root flare?**

- There are a number of reasons why the root collar may not be visible:
  - o Plant often times come from the nursery with buried trunk flares due to management practices in the nursery
  - o Over mulching or “volcano” mulching by maintenance staff
  - o Girdling roots which are the tree’s own roots that wrap around the trunk instead of extending out into the soil causing the inhibition of vascular flow and subsequent decline

### **How can I prevent or correct the problem?**

- Make certain mulch layers are only 2” thick and are not building up on the trunk over time.
- An air spade is frequently used to uncover root collars and expose girdling roots. An air spade is a compressed air tool used to evacuate soil from an area without causing physical harm to existing root zones. It has other benefits to soil health and can be used to invigorate the soil with oxygen, improve soil structure, relieve compaction and improve drainage.

**PLEASE CALL US FOR A FREE EVALUATION OF YOUR TREES (631)287-6100**