



Public Education Committee

This municipal water quality educational material was sponsored by the **Public Education Committee** of the **Pennsylvania Water Environment Association (PWEA)**. PWEA is a member association of the **Water Environment Federation (WEF)**.

Please visit our **Article Bank** for other public educational material for the municipal water quality industry.

www.pwea.org/news-and-info/article-bank/



PWEA

PO Box 3367
Gettysburg, PA 17325
www.pwea.org

**Protect Your Sewers:
Landscape & Plant
Wisely!**

*Municipal Water Quality
Public Educational Information*

PA Water Environment Association

www.pwea.org

Landscape & Plant Wisely!

Beautifully landscaped yards can be a joy to homeowners that can turn into expensive nightmares. Roots from trees can invade building sewers and laterals. Roots thrive in the warm, moist, nutrient-rich atmosphere above the water level inside sanitary sewers. The flow of warm water inside the sewer pipe causes water vapor to escape to the cold and/or dry soil surrounding the pipe. Tree roots are attracted to the water vapor leaving the pipe and they follow the vapor trail to the source of the moisture, which is usually from cracks or loose joints in the sewer pipe. Tree roots will penetrate the opening to reach the nutrients and moisture inside the pipe. This continues in winter even though trees appear to be dormant. Severe root intrusion and structurally damaged pipes will require replacement. Tree roots growing inside sewer pipes can become a costly problem for residents.



The best way to avoid this situation is to plant wisely. Do not plant trees within 20 feet from any building sewer, lateral, or sewer main. That small little twig that you plant today can grow into a big tree in a few years. Roots can travel far underground, across property lines and under paved roads. Minimize future problems by planning and planting wisely.

In Pennsylvania, homeowners and contractors are required to contact PA OneCall, by dialing 8-1-1 at least three business days before beginning any digging or excavation project. Go to www.paonecall.org for more information.

