

Bark better than bite

Damage to trees by dogs
Best practice note



A close-up photograph of a tree trunk on the left side of the frame. The trunk is covered in a protective fence made of many thin, light-colored wooden slats woven together in a lattice pattern. A black strap is visible around the middle of the trunk, securing the fence. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a park or wooded area.

Introduction

Across London dog damage to trees is increasing. This document sets out to provide tools and guidance for anyone who wishes to protect trees from this type of damage.

This is a problem in all boroughs and across all types of parks and open spaces as shown in a recent London survey (LTOA 2009). This increase is linked with a steep rise in the numbers of dogs owned over recent years.

Whilst this is primarily an antisocial behaviour problem, tree officers have an important role to play in identifying and resolving this problem.

Currently there is considerable focus on “status” or “weapon” dogs. Whilst these groups of dogs undoubtedly contribute towards this damage, it is important to realise that tree damage can be caused by all types of dogs and this document does not differentiate between status and non status dogs.

It is also important to recognise that the vast majority of dog owners are responsible and do not allow their dogs to damage trees.

The survey results show that trees in parks and housing estates are the most often damaged, however there is evidence that shows a rise in damage to street trees.

The survey also demonstrated that tree officers have not been recording dog damage when inspecting trees. Generally it comes under the overall catchall of “vandalism”. The LTOA recommends that this problem is recorded in its own right; this will enable proper monitoring on a London wide basis.

One London borough estimates the damage caused to its own trees is in excess of £1 million.

The LTOA believes that a multi-pronged, multi-agency approach is required to tackle this problem which includes education, community engagement, protection of trees and enforcement.

1 Education

“Ultimately, the best form of protection against vandalism is raising Londoners’ awareness so that they appreciate the true worth of trees and are encouraged to take a real interest in them. This is undoubtedly a long-term undertaking, but as schools take an increasing interest in nature and wildlife, so the prospects improve.”

N.D.G. James, *The Arboriculturalist’s Companion* (2nd ed. 1997)

We believe the majority of dog owners are responsible people who do not realise that the damage their dogs are causing to trees is serious. They often have the opinion of “what’s the problem, it’s a tree, it will grow back”. The message that this is not acceptable and the reasons why need to be put across.

The actions that need to be undertaken to address the problem are:

2 Protection

In some cases it is appropriate to guard the tree with a metal guard. In other cases the protection could be a hessian wrap or simply leave the grass to grow a bit longer.

3 Community engagement

The LTOA want to encourage residents to have a sense of ownership. We believe that residents will be less likely to cause and to tolerate damage occurring if they feel that these are their trees and their open spaces.

4 A multi-agency approach

This is not primarily a tree issue, the damage to trees is a consequence of antisocial behaviour and therefore it is vital to work with other agencies to help tackle all of the aspects of this problem.

5 Enforcement

Ultimately the damage caused is a criminal offence and therefore enforcement is an important tool in dealing with the problem.

Education

Education is a key component in combating damage to trees by dogs.

Education of school age children about damage to trees already takes place in some boroughs, usually involving a school visit by both arboricultural officers and animal welfare officers/animal handlers. Education can also be extended to members of the public who own dogs and are unaware of the issue of dog damage to trees.

Information needs to be freely and easily available that informs and educates people, specifically about:

- The importance and value of trees
- The physical damage that dogs cause to trees and that – if severely damaged the trees will not recover
- The impact this damage to trees has on the community as a whole
- How intimidating this sort of damage can be in creating an impression of dereliction
- What tree loss means to their local community in terms of aesthetics, green spaces, health and well being and pride in their surroundings
- The negative impact it has on tree stock and planting plans
- The financial impact of the cost to local authorities of replacement trees and physical barriers
- Improving peoples sense of responsibility about owning a dog
- Improving people's relationship with their dog through structured training techniques which encourage better dog control, better understanding of dog behaviour and an understanding of the enormous benefits of adequate and appropriate exercise
- Making clear that this is classed as criminal damage and will result in a prosecution.

Many London boroughs are already working in tandem with dog trainers or animal charities including:

Islington currently runs the 'Top Dog' dog training scheme in association with Park Guard, Islington council's parks patrol which is aimed at young people with dogs. People really enjoy the sessions, and the dogs are happier and better behaved with an owner who is confident in handling them.

Hackney work with The Blue Cross who have a 'check up van' sited outside Hackney Town Hall on Wednesdays for free dog health checks.

In **Haringey**, Wood Green Animal Shelter plan to hold training sessions with a professional who specialises in the training of 'status dogs'. This scheme will start in March 2010 in Lordship Park and will be targeting young dog owners with bull-terriers and mastiffs.

The Wood Green Animal Shelter said that when approached, the majority of young dog owners were keen to learn how to control their dogs but assumed that they would meet with general disapproval for owning what the public perceive as a 'status' dog.

This endorses the power of positive education and the changes it can make as opposed to a more negative, 'stamping out' approach.

With the right role models and achievable teaching techniques dog owners can be encouraged to have a much better sense of responsibility and ownership. In addition, it shows that a lot of people are looking for guidance and are willing to learn.

Posters informing people of the threat of prosecution are another useful and highly visible educational tool and are a reminder that trees in housing estates and parks are being policed.

Croydon Council has been placing posters on damaged trees and arboricultural officers have noticed a big difference in that damaged trees are then left alone. An example of these posters can be found in appendix A



How dogs can damage trees

Damage can occur to both newly planted and well established trees. Tree damage can take the form of bark stripping and branch chewing. As a substitute to weight pulling, which is a well known technique of strengthening jaws, dogs are instead trained to hang from low branches and chew bark.

Bark stripping damages the vascular system of the tree which frequently results in its death by cutting off the connection between root and crown.

Branch chewing creates wounds on the tree which leaves the tree open to decay pathogens.

Not even heritage trees are immune to attack, as can be seen with the dog damage on one of the Great Trees of London in Brunswick Square, Camden

Dog damage also reduces the amenity and aesthetic value of the tree and leaves the tree vulnerable to further vandalism.

Protective measures for trees generally take one of two forms. The first is that of physical solutions – guards and fencing. They work because they very obviously restrict the access to the more vulnerable parts of the tree. However, fencing solutions are costly, detract from the aesthetic value of the tree and present a psychological barrier to people who want to enjoy trees in a non-destructive way. The perception of trees surrounded by guards can be one of estrangement. Once the fate of the trees is taken out of the hands of residents or regular users of streets and open spaces, there can be a lack of interest in what they (the people) believe they can do to help. In other words; the strength of the fencing can also be its weakness.

As technology advances and the designs of fencing improves, it may be that the problem of 'hands off the trees!' inferred by fencing recedes and

the perfect form of tree protection is developed. But for the time-being, the alternative is a second form of protection – the non-physical type, which includes virtually everything that is not an actual fence or barrier. This invariably crosses over with the other methods described in this note (education, engagement, enforcement), but may just be as simple as how the tree forms part of the landscape. Instating shrub beds around the base of trees is one example, as some anecdotal evidence suggests that city-dwelling dog owners don't like to get their shoes dirty. Another example would be consideration at the planning or redevelopment stage of spaces to include trees, for encouraging foot traffic away from the trees using architectural design whether this is paving or street furniture of some sort.

Physical protective measures against damage

Fencing

Metal fencing is probably the most common form of protection for young trees. It is usually employed where there is a question of damage, for example busy street plantings, but in the case of areas where trees are prone to dog damage it becomes a necessary part of the cost of planting a new tree. It comes in a few different formats; it can be a light wire mesh type attached to the tree stakes or a heavier gauge steel construction.



Benefits

- Definite protection against most forms of physical attack to trees
- Regular inspection needed giving opportunity to monitor trees closely
- 100% recyclable tree guards are available
- Light steel guards offer a more attractive / less imposing visual impact

Drawbacks

- Costly
- Require regular inspection – if not monitored they can actually damage the tree especially if the tree outgrows the guard
- Are generally not reusable
- Taller guards can be unstable and cause damage to trees and stem weakness in windy situations
- Can be unsightly and sometimes actually attract vandalism
- Stops people getting close to trees
- Wire mesh and stakes can be a litter trap

Bamboo wrapping



Bamboo wrapping is a more 'natural' approach to tree protection. By using naturally occurring materials only green waste is produced if the fencing becomes damaged, and it is significantly easier on the eye than steel fencing. It is made of bamboo strips held in place by wire, which are wrapped around the stem of the tree. Due to its application method it is used to protect trees which are too big for traditional fencing, so is unlikely to be suitable for younger trees, but it may be possible to apply it to the nursery size 'Select standard' (girth 10 – 12cm) and up. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the splintering effect of the bamboo deters dogs from continuing to attack bamboo wrapped trees.

Benefits

- Cheap
- 'Natural' look to the application
- Difficult to burn

Drawbacks

- Not as sturdy as metal

Hessian wrapping on stem



Hessian wrapping is a method of protection employed by nurseries when moving tree stock around. It can occasionally be seen left on newly planted trees by the arborists either due to attempting to insulate the young stem against very cold weather or as a method of soft protection for the tree if in an area where damage is likely.

Benefits

- Cheap
- 'Natural' look to the application
- If not removed then the hessian material will eventually rot away

Drawbacks

- Confusing to some public – not sure what the wrapping is for
- The degradation period can appear unsightly
- Can be burnt
- Wrapping should be secured with suitable ties that will not constrict the tree as it grows

Tree shelters



Tree shelters are more commonly used for the establishment of young trees in planting programmes. They offer protection from herbicide application as well as wild animals. They may not offer much protection from dog damage as the initial attack may come from the owners, but are an alternative to metal guards in discouraging attack. Most modern commercially available tree shelters are made from photodegradable materials avoiding environmentally damaging PVC, and so avoid the issue of harmful waste products.

Benefits

- Cheaper than metal guards
- Modern designs incorporate a degradation system – e.g. some shelters have a perforation running up one side that splits as the girth of the tree increases

Drawbacks

- Not as resistant to attack as the metal guards
- If not properly monitored the shelters can allow long grass / insect pests to establish within the shelter
- Can only be used for small whips

Chestnut paling wrapped around the stem



Chestnut paling is a similar fencing application to that of bamboo wrapping – instead of bamboo strips it uses small girth (not less than 100mm) chestnut stakes of a half-round or triangular cross section. It is a traditional fencing product of sweet chestnut coppices of south east England, and is usually employed as a 'stand alone' fencing product, but works well when wrapped around the base of larger trees.

Benefits

- Cheaper than metal
- Supports coppice economy
- Doesn't require treating in same way as conventional wooden fencing to stop rot

Drawbacks

- Durability may be an issue
- While strong enough to withstand animal attacks, it can be easily damaged by vandals
- Impression of temporary fencing

Chilli powder on hessian wrap



Chilli powder can be applied to trees if mixed with water and sprayed onto the stem. It has the obvious unpleasant taste effect on the dog, and is practically invisible to the eye once applied. But its effectiveness is limited as it will be washed off in the first good rainfall after application. Any of the methods mentioned here could be viewed as contentious if they are seen to be 'harmful' to the dogs.

Benefits

- Effective deterrent

Drawbacks

- Limited duration of protection
- May be a contentious issue with dog owners
- Must be done on a dry day
- Possible health and safety issues – people getting it on hands and into eyes etc

Non-physical (barrier) protective measures

Mulching



Mulching an area around the base of the tree is an interesting approach to tree protection. It may not be as much of a barrier to dog owners (who care more for the appearance of their shoes than for the trees they vandalise) than installing shrub borders at the base of a tree, but it does work in a very similar fashion – that of a psychological barrier to the area surrounding the tree. It also negates the competition for ground moisture that shrubs would present, while allowing the tree to take advantage of the traditional plus points associated with mulching: it helps to retain moisture in the ground in dry weather, and temperature regulation/frost protection in cold weather..

Benefits

- Benefits:
- Natural solution
- Creates 'psychological barrier'
- Beneficial effects for the tree – temperature regulation summer & winter; moisture retention in dry periods

Drawbacks

- Minimal protection

Biodegradable grease



The application of biodegradable grease could be seen as a ‘green’ method of protection – theoretically it is not harmful to the tree, the localised environment or the dog. However it is very visible when applied to the tree so immediately lowers amenity value and as with the chilli powder idea its effectiveness is limited by adverse weather conditions. An unusual method, but one that has been observed in some London boroughs.

Benefits

- Eliminates the need for fencing

Drawbacks

- Must be non-toxic and is therefore of reduced effect
- The grease is specialist and expensive (approx £150-300 per tree)
- The effect does not last long only up to a year

Long grass



Leaving the grass to grow in some areas of open spaces / parklands may give the trees therein enough time to establish themselves if young trees, or ‘recovery’ time if they have been the subject of attack. Working on the assumption that the grass provides a ‘soft barrier’ to getting near enough to the tree to damage it, it may keep potential offenders at bay.

Benefits

- Natural solution
- ‘Meadow’ features for encouraging wildlife
- Also removes problem of mower/trimmer damage to tree

Drawbacks

- May appear ‘unsightly’ to the uninformed
- Not popular option for grounds keepers – especially where green flag status etc is being sought
- Competition for water in establishing trees

Planting 'repellent' trees or shrubs around base

Planting repellent trees which animals don't like e.g. Abies or Taxus. Or thorny shrubs planted round the base of the tree e.g. Berberis and Pyracantha.

Benefits

- May instil deterrent behaviour within dogs

Drawbacks

- Can only be achieved at the expense of variety in planting schemes

Basal Growth

Similar to leaving the grass to grow around a tree or planting shrubs around the base of trees, this can help to create a 'soft barrier' around the tree.

Benefits

- Eliminates the need for non-natural solution such as fencing
- Saves on the removal regime budget!

Drawbacks

- May appear unsightly to those not aware of reasons for doing so
- May be a hazard in terms of sight lines for traffic, footpaths etc
- Doesn't stop low branch damage

Lifting crown out of dog's or owners' reach

Some anecdotal evidence suggests that dogs can jump 6', and this height can easily be reached if the owner picks the dog up

Benefits

- Eliminates the need for fencing

Drawbacks

- Does not protect the stem and this would need another form of protection

Other non-physical (barrier) protective measures

- Threat of legal enforcement (ASBO etc) – through working with safer neighbourhood teams, park wardens, even friends groups for intelligence on catching offenders
- Avoidance training for the dogs
- Contact owner and make aware of effects of this anti-social behaviour, how much it is costing their local authority which takes resources away from them. Threat of eviction for council tenants breaking lease/tenancy regulations
- Tree warden schemes

Community engagement

Park users need to be made aware of the damage to the trees and play equipment and how to report incidents confidentially. They should also be made aware of what the council will do should someone's dog be caught carrying out the damage.

This could be achieved through displaying notices on existing park notice boards and encouraging the park ranger/warden teams to be proactive, by making park users aware of the problem and to report incidents.

Another way would be to engage with existing Friends of Park groups, or if resources are available seek to establish a user forum/friends of group to tackle the issue. They can actively report and log incidents in the park. Also to work closely with residents associations and other less formal users of the open space such as mother and toddler groups, or sport clubs. If the problem is associated with young people, seek to engage with the youth service and their detached youth workers.

Housing services and tenant involvement officers can assist with promoting the campaign to their tenants and street wardens. Neighbourhood watch or tree warden schemes can equally help to spread the message and can be encouraged to report incidents.

Community engagement can also take place through tree planting schemes particularly in housing estates, school assemblies and dog training.

Timing of tree removal after damage

When trees are killed by dog damage, consideration should be given as to when to remove the tree. Experience in some boroughs has shown that when damaged or dead trees are removed quickly, other nearby trees have an increased risk of the same type of damage. This may be as a result of a misplaced sense of power through cause and effect, i.e. damage the tree, the tree is cut down.

Where possible, it may be better to leave recently dead trees standing as the perpetrators may lose interest in damaging trees. Standing dead trees can also be used as an opportunity to advertise the problem by affixing posters to them.

Micro chipping

If a dog is micro chipped with his own unique identification number registered on a national database, owners can be traced very quickly and the dog can be returned safe and sound.

Case Study – Islington

A number of trees died on an estate in Islington after being damaged by. The council held a joint tree planting/dog training event, which was publicised through the local press and posters. The council also identified schools with catchment areas that contain the estate, they then gave joint assemblies with the animal welfare unit publicising the issues and inviting children along to the event. The tree service also leafleted the entire estate and held open meetings in the community centre so residents could sign up to plant a tree, and select the species and location of where they wanted to plant a tree.

The event was well attended, and so far (though it is early days) none of these new trees have been damaged and the amount of dog damage on the estate has reduced.



4 Multi-agency approach

This problem is primarily an antisocial behaviour problem, of which tree damage is a consequence. It is important that tree officers seek to work with other agencies in order to tackle this problem effectively. The following have proved useful:

Local authority animal welfare officers/dog wardens

They will have an understanding of the wider problem within the local area. They may be able to offer dog training as well as be able to identify illegal breeds of dogs and take further action.

The council community safety team

They have a remit for tackling and reducing antisocial behaviour in the borough.

The council youth offending team/youth intervention team

These are professionals that engage with young people to provide diversion from crime and ASB. Some of their clients may be responsible for tree damage by dogs.

Animal welfare charities

Mistreatment of any dogs can be reported to the RSPCA. Animal welfare charities may also assist with community initiatives including education and micro chipping on a small scale.

Housing organisations, local authorities and registered social landlords

They are usually by far the largest landlords in boroughs, and will have a large tree population. Implementing tenancy agreements and a strong pet's policy as part of their housing management standards can be a useful vehicle to encourage responsible dog ownership.

Police

Safer neighbourhood teams should be the first port of call when localised problems arise. These groups are usually multi-agency and will be familiar with local problems.

Where evidence of criminal damage is present and the perpetrators have been identified, this should be passed to the police who can prosecute for criminal damage.

In areas where there is considerable damage and evidence indicating that status/fighting dogs are being trained or bred, this information can be reported to the Metropolitan Police Status Dogs Unit (SDU) via the LTOA. The SDU will prioritise the areas they will investigate. When reporting you should provide as much evidence as possible, including photographs and detailed location and send the information to the LTOA executive officer. The SDU is very busy and it is unlikely that you will receive acknowledgement.

People with dogs project

The people with dogs project is a London-based educational project set up to tackle the growing problem of anti-social behaviour with dogs. Three leading animal charities Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, The Blue Cross, and the RSPCA joined with the Metropolitan Police, the GLA and Wandsworth Council to establish the project. A short film and workshop has been produced to stimulate thought and debate amongst young people, aiming to influence their behaviour. To receive training to deliver this workshop in your area please contact Battersea Dogs and Cats Home: peoplewithdogs@battersea.org.uk

Kennel Club good citizen dog scheme

The Kennel Club good citizen dog scheme is the largest dog training scheme in the UK. Its aim is to promote responsible dog ownership. If your local authority wants to run a course, The Kennel Club will provide all participating clubs with course material, advice, guidelines, publicity, marketing, rosettes and certificates, free of charge. However, the dog owners will need to pay a fee of between £2 to £5 per class, depending on location and how much time per week they partake. Most dog owners normally need to attend between 8 to 10 classes (1 per week) to get achieve an award.

Other useful agencies

- Friends of Parks group
- Resident's associations
- The Dogs Trust

It should be noted that dog owners who engage in organised dog fighting rarely train their dogs in the public domain. The types of dogs that do damage trees belong to irresponsible dog owners. These are mostly owners who believe that it is a fun activity for the dog to do and do not consider the many consequences that this causes. There is a small group of people that own dogs that have been described as status dogs or weapon dogs. They believe that this type of activity helps to strengthen the dog's jaw and to make it aggressive. Although this is damaging to the trees, it is also very cruel to the dog. This type of owner is harder to change with education, and often relies on a multi-agency approach resulting in legal action.

Laws directly affecting dog owners

There are a number of Acts and Orders which responsible dog owners should be aware of. These are legal responsibilities.

These Acts and Orders are listed below.

Control of Dogs Order 1992

This requires that every dog, while in a public place, wears a collar with the name and address of his owner inscribed on it or on a disc attached to it. If a collar is not worn when out in a public place, the dog may be seized by the local authority dog/animal warden and treated as a stray. Also the owner, and/ or any person in charge of the dog permitting him to be in a public place without a collar, will each be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted and fined.

Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (outside London) and Metropolitan Police Act 1839 (London)

These Acts make it an offence to allow an unmuzzled, ferocious dog to be left at large, or for a person to set on or to urge any dog attack, worry or put in fear any person or animal in the street. This act is not currently enforced by the Metropolitan Police, but local authorities may adopt and enforce it.

Dogs Act 1871

Under this Act, a court may, upon complaint that a dog is dangerous and not kept under proper control, order the owner to keep him under proper control or to be destroyed. A complaint may be laid by a member of the public, a local authority or the police. There is a cost involved which currently is approx £120.00

Road Traffic Act 1988

This makes it an offence to have a dog on a designated road without the dog being held on a lead. Designated road is a legal definition. A number of municipal local authorities do not have designated roads. Check with the individual authority's highways department for clarification.

Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) 1991

There are two main sections to this Act. Section 1 applies to four specific banned breeds of dog including 'the type of dog known as the pit bull terrier'. The courts have the discretion to decide that individual banned dogs are safe to return to their owners, in which case the owners of these types have to comply with certain legal requirements, including having their dog registered, neutered, micro chipped and tattooed, the dog must always be walked by someone over the age of 16 and muzzled. Section 3 applies to all dogs, making it a criminal offence to allow a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. This includes instances where there is fear that an injury might occur. Owners found guilty under either section of the Act could have their dog destroyed, face the possibility of six months in prison and/or a fine not exceeding level 5 (at present up to £5,000). There is no legal definition of allowing a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place. Case studies have showed that it is accepted that this means to place fear in an individual that they will be bitten, or that the dog actually bites an individual.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Since 6th April 2006 local authorities in England and Wales have had the power to introduce new Dog Control Orders under this Act.

These Orders may restrict where you can walk your dog (on or off lead), how many dogs you can walk at one time, and makes it an offence if a person in charge of a dog fails to clean up its faeces. Designated land may include roads, parks and other public areas within the local authority's boundaries; in fact any land which is open to the air and to which the public are permitted to have access. If you don't abide by these Orders, you could be fined up to £1000. It is no defence to claim ignorance of the dog's actions.

Local Authorities now have sole responsibility for stray dogs under s68 of this Act.

ABCs and ASBOs

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

These are usually organised through the Community Safety section and are useful as both an interim measure (ABC) and a permanent solution (ASBO). Breaches of an ASBO can result in an indeterminate custodial sentence.

Byelaws

These may present a way of enforcement and therefore these should be looked at. However byelaws differ from borough to borough and many byelaws have been superseded by new statute and are not enforceable.

New byelaws can be introduced but this is a long process that ends up with the secretary of state.

There are several Acts on the Statute Book which protect dogs from ill treatment, among them are the following:

Animal Welfare Act

This Act came into force on the 27th March 2007 in Wales and the 6th April 2007 in England. This Act introduces the new legal concept of a 'duty

of care', which means that people are now legally obliged to ensure the welfare of the animals in their care. A person who owns a dog, or is looking after a dog (or other animals covered by the Act) must make sure the dog has a suitable environment; has a suitable diet; is able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. The carer must also address the dog's need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals. The Act also covers the sale of animals to people under 16 years, dog fighting, tail docking and more.

Abandonment of Animals Act 1960

This Act extends the definition of cruelty to include abandonment of an animal.

Criminal Damage Act 1971

(1) A person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another; intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged shall be guilty of an offence. (2) A person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property, whether belonging to himself or another – (a) intending to destroy or damage any property or being reckless as to whether any property would be destroyed or damaged; and (b) intending by the destruction or damage to endanger the life of another or being reckless as to whether the life of another would be thereby endangered; shall be guilty of an offence.

Further details on all these Acts can be found on the DEFRA website – <http://www.defra.gov.uk/News/2009/090416.htm>.

Civil cases

It may be difficult to bring a criminal prosecution. The Acts detailed above do not directly cover damage to property by dogs. It is possible for councils to bring civil cases against dog owners who allow their dogs to damage trees.

Notices

This notice is used in London Borough of Croydon and is put up in areas where trees are damaged by dogs

Trees being damaged by dogs

A large number of trees in the park have had bark torn from them by dogs. Unfortunately in many cases the damage is so bad that the affected trees will die. It is therefore important that this criminal damage is stopped immediately.

If you are a dog owner or in charge of a dog and are allowing or encouraging the dog to cause damage to the trees in this way please be advised that the Council will take legal action to prosecute anyone in whose care the dog is at the time of the offence.

The Council asks all park visitors and neighbouring residents who see or hear anything of concern to please contact the Council's security on and report any incidents.

Green Spaces Manager

**CROYDON
COUNCIL**
www.croydon.gov.uk

Appendix B

Specifications Guidance for dog protection for trees

Bamboo wrapping, hessian wrapping and chestnut paling

Bamboo wrapping

Specifications for bamboo:

Height 1m (minimum)

Width of single pieces of bamboo 5mm

Twilweld mesh 1.2m height

Thickness 1-3mm

Fixings:

- Attach the bamboo to the tree using heavy gauge cable ties as shown
- The length of the bamboo will depend on the circumference of the tree



Benefits:

- Cheap to install
- More pleasing on the eye
- Save room in the open space
- Difficult to burn

Drawbacks:

- Not as sturdy as other forms of protection
- Not a long term solution
- New evidence that the dogs are ripping off the bamboo
- The dogs are jumping above the protection

Hessian wrapping

Specifications for hessian and twilweld mesh:

Hessian 1.2m height (minimum)

Width of hessian will depend on the circumference of the tree

Twilweld mesh 1.2m height

25mm by 25mm holes

Gauge 16 (1.6mm thickness of the wire)

None galvanised

Fixings:

- Use 1.6mm none tensile wire at top middle and bottom of the twilweld to attach hessian to the twilweld
- Weave the wire through the hessian and the twilweld every 100mm
- Then place hessian and twilweld around the base of the tree
- Use the tree wires and twist together to secure the hessian and twilweld to the base of the tree

Benefits:

- Quick to install
- Harder for the dog to bite through
- Protects the base of the tree
- Wires can be adjusted easily as the tree grows
- Sturdy
- Save room in the open space



Drawbacks:

- Psychological barrier to public
- Poor aesthetic value
- Only protects base of the tree
- Hessian easy to burn

Chestnut paling

Specifications for young trees for chestnut paling:

Height 1.2m (minimum)

Length 1.5m (a standard roll of paling comes at 9 meters in length so this will do six trees per roll)

Fixings:

- Three 1.6m by 50mm-75mm round wooden stakes (5'-6" by 2"-3")
- Drive stakes in to the ground in a triangle shape at 0.5m (1'-7") outside to outside of the stake leaving 1.2m of the stake showing
- Fix 75mm by 38mm (3" by 1 1/2")(1 1/2")timber on the inside with 50mm (2") nails at 900mm on the stakes
- If any weeds present around the tree then remove them
- Place mulch within the triangle at 50mm-100mm (2"-4") in depth
- Leave a 100mm (4") hole around the base of the tree (root collar)
- Place the paling around the stakes and attach to the stake with 40mm staples



Benefits:

- Sturdy
- More of a physical solution against dogs jumping up at the tree
- Long term solution for protection
- Long term financial benefits
- Mulch will provide nutrients (organic matter) to the soil and water ration

Drawbacks:

- Loss in aesthetic value of the tree
- Psychological barrier to the public
- Costly for the short term

Dog damage to trees is a real problem in many parts of London. You can see the scars on mature and young trees alike; broken branches and stripped bark. While some of this vandalism is caused by thoughtless owners of non-dangerous dogs, much of it is the result of so called "training" of weapon dogs, particularly in an attempt to "strengthen" their jaws (for what?! You might ask).

At City Hall we believe that our parks are the crowning glory of the capital, and their trees are the jewels in that crown. So much so that the Mayor has committed to planting 10,000 new trees across the city. We now need to protect all our trees from dog damage, and we have already started to tackle the rise in weapon dogs through the police and local authorities.

By producing this guide and offering practical advice to councils, LTOA are playing their part in dealing with a serious problem, the scars of which sadly already deface many of our much loved green spaces.

Kit Malthouse, AM, Deputy Mayor for Policing



MAYOR OF LONDON

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