

# → Trees and your sewer pipes

## Tree roots – a growing problem

Invasive tree roots are the most common cause of blockages to sewer pipes in East Gippsland. They also have the potential to cause major damage to buildings, footpaths, driveways, fences and household drainage pipes.

It is estimated that water-seeking tree roots are responsible for 30% of all blockages within the East Gippsland Water sewer network. The Corporation spends around \$200,000 a year clearing these obstructions and on prevention programs such as root cutting.

## Moisture search

Tree root systems can be very aggressive in their search for moisture, particularly during periods of dry weather and drought. Often sewer pipes are the nearest source of water. They provide the added bonus of nutrients, which encourage root growth.

Roots start as fine, fibrous feeding masses which can penetrate the smallest fractures in pipe works. They often establish quickly, blocking or damaging pipes and sewers.

## Who Pays?

The maintenance of sewer and water pipes within your property boundary is your responsibility. East Gippsland Water is responsible from the point at which your property connects to the sewer and water main supplying your street.

If the root problem is on your property you will need to contact a licensed plumber to fix it at your expense. If the tree is on your property and causes damage to a public asset outside your property boundary, you may be held liable for the damage caused.

In such instances it may be advisable to remove the offending tree as it will probably continue to cause damage. Contact a professional arborist for advice.

## Problem prevention

**Locating sewer pipes** - Knowing where your sewer pipes run will help identify areas to avoid when planting certain trees and shrubs. It will also help determine where existing trees and shrubs may need to be removed.

If you do not know where your pipes are, check with East Gippsland Water. In nearly all cases we can provide a map pinpointing their position.

**What trees to plant?** - Ask an arborist or your local nursery to recommend suitable trees and shrubs to plant close to sewer pipes and those best to avoid. The diagram overleaf also provides some examples (this is for guidance only).

# Be sewer smart when planting trees



## For more information:

**Ph:** 1300 720 700 or (03) 5150 4444

**Email:** [egw@egwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:egw@egwater.vic.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.egwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.egwater.vic.gov.au)

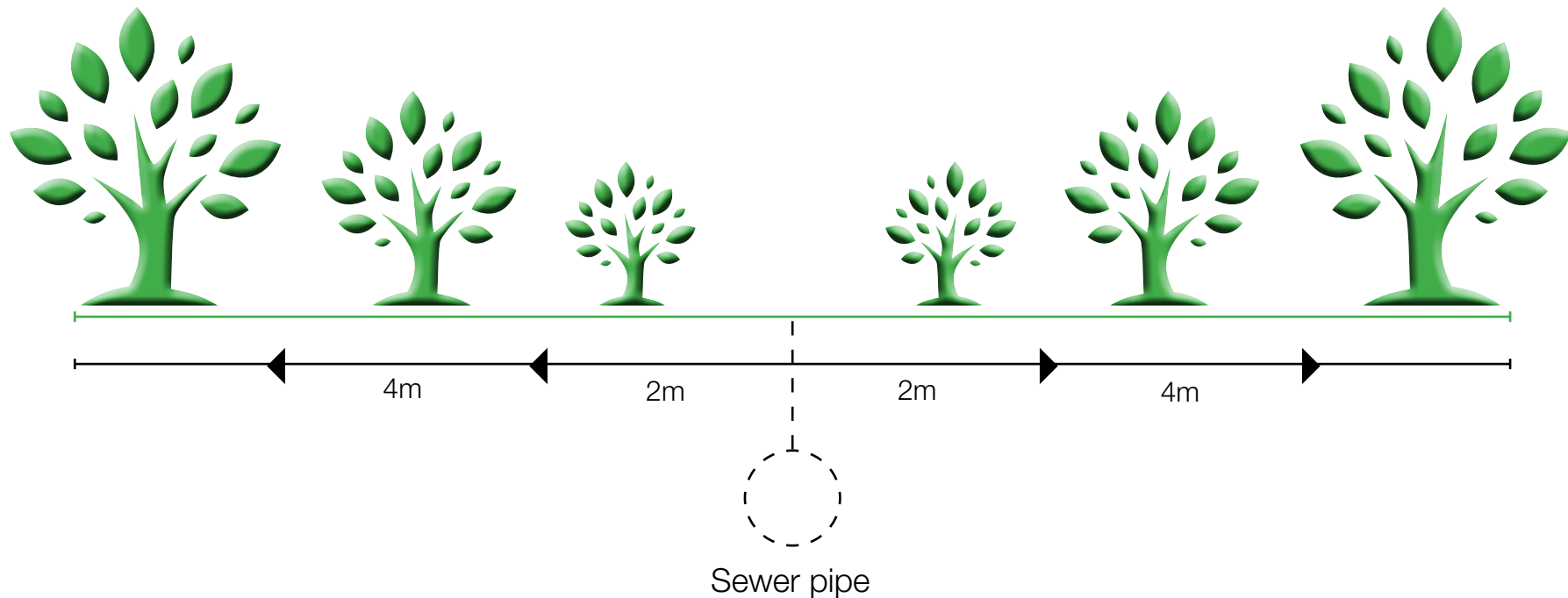


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Ph: 1300 720 700 or (03) 5150 4444  
24 hour emergency: 1300 134 202  
[www.egwater.vic.gov.au](http://www.egwater.vic.gov.au)



## What to plant and where



### Some examples of what can be planted **at least 2m** from the sewer:

- Hakea (most species)
- Correa (most species)
- Melaleuca (most species)
- Wattle (most species)

### Some examples of what can be planted **within 2m** of the sewer:

- Kangaroo Grass
- Lillies
- Daisies
- Tussock Grasses

### Some examples of **what NOT to plant** near sewers:

- Callistemon (most species)
- Eucalyptus (most species)
- Populus (most species)
- Ficus (most species)

Climatic and growing conditions vary widely in East Gippsland.

The lists above are provided as a basic guide only. Please consult with your local garden nursery and/or arborist for more information.