CHECKLIST

Visual tree assessment

The checklist presented here is intended as a guide and inspiration. It includes useful examples of things to look for during your Visual Tree Assessment (VTA). You should adapt the checklist to the situations you typically encounter as well as to the requirements of laws and regulations in your area. Safety first – always!

Start the inspection by approaching the tree. Examine the tree in this order: the crown; the root zone; and the trunk. When felling a tree from the ground, see the additional checklist below. Complete the checklist and take notes. *If the answer is yes, decide on how it impacts your work plan – but only if you feel confident that the work can be performed safely.*

CROWN

	YES	NO
Hangers or lodged branches?		
Dead or weak branches?		
Weak branch attachments?		
Cracks/splits along stem, branch/branch attachment?		
Asymmetrical crown?		
Interference with other trees ?		
Animals, bird nests, etc?		

ROOT ZONE

Weakening in the tree's anchoring in the ground?		
Mushrooms at the tree base?		
Cracks near root flare?		
Lack of root flare?		
Soil mounding or compaction?		
Suspected root damage from vehicles or machines?		
Suspected changes in the ground due to earthworks?		

	YES	NO
Windblown/uprooted tree?		
If yes:		
Lean of the uprooted section?		
Loose rocks in uprooted section?		
Tension in the tree trunk?		
Other trees affected by the uprooted part?		
Frozen ground: will the uprooted part fall back once cut?		
Other trees (large or small) affected by the fallen tree?		
Rough terrain: slopes, rocks, holes, wet/muddy areas, etc?		

TRUNK

Signs of decay?		
Mushrooms on the trunk?		
Cracks and cavities?		
Loose bark?		
Swelling or depressions?		
Clambering plants?		
Insect infestation?		

CHECKLIST: FELLING THE TREE FROM THE GROUND

If the tree is to be felled from the ground, your Visual Tree Assessment should also include the following:

Tree height:		Tree reach:		Tree lean, direction:	
Width of crown:				Estimated centre of gravity:	
Species of tree:				Strong branches?	YES NO

Note: can be offset due to an asymmetric crown.

Is your escape route obstructed by rocks, fences or buildings, etc?	YES	NO

Note: it is vital to have a clear escape route that is free from obstacles for a safe retreat.