



What Do Trees Have to Do with Pipeline Safety?

If you live along the right of way, you are probably accustomed to seeing crews mow the grass and trim overgrowth from trees and shrubs. Most landowners appreciate when Colonial mows the easement because it keeps the landscape tidy. Unfortunately, the same thing can't be said for tree removal or side trimming. But what landowners may not understand is that these activities are among the ways in which Colonial manages its commitment to safety and pipeline integrity.

Tree & Shrub Overgrowth

There are two issues associated with tree and shrub overgrowth on the pipeline right of way:

1. **TREE CANOPIES** can overhang the right of way, preventing our pilots from being able to see the pipeline from the air. Aerial patrol planes fly the entire pipeline system on a regular basis, looking for evidence of leaks, unauthorized digging and other situations that could threaten the safety of the pipeline. A clear view of the pipeline right of way is required to ensure no potential problems go unnoticed.
2. **TREE ROOTS** are another serious threat to pipeline integrity. Below are pictures of tree roots and the damage they can cause to pipelines. Picture 1 shows a tree root that was discovered during excavation of the pipeline. The tree was too close to the line, and the growing root physically impinged on the pipeline. In picture 2, you can see how the root exerted sufficient pressure to damage the protective pipe coating and expose the bare steel to corrosion. In extreme cases, growing tree roots can lift or displace the pipeline, subjecting it to stress damage.



Limiting the Impact to Your Landscape

- Prior to the start of any landscaping project, **Call 811** to have all underground lines marked. This will give you the best idea of where under-ground utilities are located so you don't install landscaping in an area that will later need to be removed.
- Colonial can also advise you and your contractor about the kinds of plantings that have shallow root growth and can be safely planted on or near the right of way. Ask for a copy of Colonial's Landscape Standard for assistance in selecting appropriate plantings.

Colonial understands how important your home and landscaping are to you. But, before tree overgrowth and roots create potential safety conditions that could result in a leak, we need to remove them. Keeping communities safe is the driver for these actions.