

Site guidance for excavating post locations in root protection areas (RPAs)

1. All excavation in RPAs must be carried out carefully using hand tools, taking care not to damage the bark and wood of any roots. Specialist tools for removing soil around roots using compressed air may be an appropriate alternative to hand digging, if available.
2. All soil removal must be undertaken with care to minimise the disturbance of roots beyond the immediate area of excavation. Where possible, flexible clumps of smaller roots, including fibrous roots, should be retained if they can be displaced temporarily or permanently beyond the excavation without damage.
3. If digging by hand, a fork should be used to loosen the soil and help locate any substantial roots. Once roots have been located, the trowel should be used to clear the soil away from them without damaging the bark.
4. Exposed roots to be removed should be cut cleanly with a sharp saw or secateurs 10–20cm behind the final face of the excavation.
5. Roots temporarily exposed must be protected from direct sunlight, drying out and extremes of temperature by appropriate covering such as hessian sacking or boards.
6. Roots greater than 2.5cm in diameter should be retained where possible. Roots 2.5–10cm in diameter should only be cut in exceptional circumstances. Roots greater than 10cm in diameter should only be cut after consultation with the appropriate supervisory officer.
7. The design should be sufficiently flexible to allow the hole-locations to be moved slightly if roots greater than 2.5cm in diameter are found in the preferred locations.