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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Take care

If you are in an area where tuart trees are showing signs of being attacked by the insects, don't park or sit under the trees as limbs and branches could fall suddenly.

Where can I get more information?

For further information, you are welcome to contact CALM's Mandurah office on telephone 9582 9333 or the Swan Regional Office on 9368 4399 during working hours Monday to Friday.

How can I help?

If you have any information that may be helpful in addressing this serious issue, or notice new outbreaks of tuart tree deaths, please contact CALM.

TUART TREE DEATHS/CROWN DECLINE

LAKE PRESTON AND LAKE CLIFTON AREAS



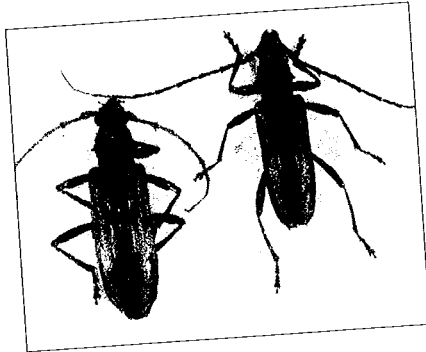
What's happening to the tuart trees?

Lake Clifton and Lake Preston and neighbouring areas are renowned for their stands of tuart trees. Tuarts (*Eucalyptus gomphocephalus*) were once widespread along the Swan Coastal Plain but clearing for towns, communities and farmland has restricted big stands to conservation areas such as Yalgorup National Park, Ludlow Forest and around Busselton.

Many of the tuarts in Lake Clifton, Lake Preston and surrounding areas have been attacked by an insect - the tuart borer - which has had a severe impact on the trees and in some instances has led to the death of trees.

Why is it happening?

The Department of Conservation and Land Management along with other agencies has been studying the reasons for the crown decline caused by the tuart borers. Information on extremes of weather, exclusion of fire and available water levels is being analysed to determine the underlying cause of the severe attack by insect borers.



The tuart borer (*Phoracantha impavida*) is recognised as the main contributor to the severe branch decline that is obvious in the tuart trees.

The borer 'burrows' in under the bark and then makes its way around the limb. This is known as 'girdling'. The result is the same as if the limb had been 'ringbarked' and leads to the death of the limb. In the most severe cases, the borers will girdle the entire trunk and kill the tree.

Tuart borers are a naturally occurring insect that would have evolved with the tuart trees over hundreds of thousands of years. Consequently, outbreaks of insect attack are natural and the tuart forest has recovered in the past.

How far has it spread?

At the end of 1999, the most severe impact on the tuarts was in an area from White Hills Road South to Preston Beach Road on the Old Coast Road.

What's being done about it?

The severity and spread of the current insect attack are unprecedented in recent times and CALM believes that much of the tuart forest within affected areas will need to be regenerated because of the deaths of trees. Work also will be needed in some recreation areas and campsites to ensure the safety of the public.

CALM will be undertaking this work early in the New Year.

CALM also is liaising with local landowners and businesses to investigate possible treatments for individual trees, such as spraying, as well as regenerating badly affected areas.