

City crews cut work time in half with grinder



The Promark root grinder saves crews time when removing trees.

Beautiful things, trees. But, they can sometimes create problems with city sidewalks.

"If trees aren't watered properly, the roots sometimes start coming up," says Danny Mendez, public works and street supervisor for the city of Fontana, Calif. "Here in Fontana, we get lots of complaints."

Fifteen years ago, city crews planted ash saplings in parkways and dividing strips between sidewalks and roadways in new housing developments. Today, the backlog of root-cutting jobs is enough to keep the department busy for weeks on end.

Ash trees do not drive their roots very deeply into the soil. Instead, the roots push outward seeking water at the surface and two to three inches below the surface. The exposed roots can eventually become a nuisance, creating hazardous conditions and liability problems, destroying concrete sidewalks, curbs, driveways, sewer and drainage lines.

According to city workers Herm Zander and Leo Bishop, the job of cutting the roots on one side of one tree used to take two men three to four hours each with axes, shovels, crowbars and picks. Then, 1½ years ago, director of maintenance services Guy Patterson ordered a Model 16SP

stump and root grinder from Promark Products West.

"It's real handy," claims Mendez. "It saves our crew a tremendous amount of time. We try to save as many trees as possible, but when we have to remove one it takes less than an hour. Sidewalk repairs only take a few minutes. I wish we'd've gotten the grinder a long time ago."

Mendez says that the grinder is

also very inexpensive to maintain. Blades which sell for approximately \$35 a set are replaced once a year.

Zander and Bishop cite the cutter wheel's location as a handy feature. It is out back where the operator can see it and visually guide its path without endangering himself, the tree or the machine.

"I don't know how we got along without that grinder," says Patterson. **LM**



Danny Mendez (right) gets some tips about the Promark grinder from one of the workers who uses it in Fontana, Calif.