

# Visual Identification Series (VIS) - Indicators of Stem Decay in Trees

## Introduction

Indicators of decay (IOD) suggest that internal decay is present in a tree. Some indicators are positive and some are suggestive or potential indicators of decay. Arborists and urban tree managers need to be acutely aware of IOD's as they can provide evidence of decay that may require further evaluation using other decay detection methods. IOD are useful to help determine locations to test the tree for decay.

## Positive Indicators

These indicators mean the tree has some degree of internal decay. The extent of decay can sometimes be visually estimated. Trees with positive indicators may have to be evaluated further.



Single Conks-Heart Rot



Numerous Small Conks-Sap Rot



External Cavities



Carpenter Ant Sawdust



Nesting Holes



Visual Evidence

**VIS-Potential Indicators of Stem Decay in Trees.**  
**Trees may or may not have decay. Additional evaluation may be warranted**



Old Pruning Wounds



Decayed Branch Stubs



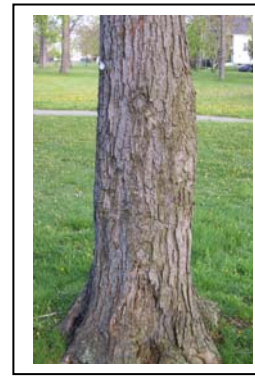
Old Wounds



Resinous on conifers



Dogleg Branching



Bulges



Compression Forks



Cracks



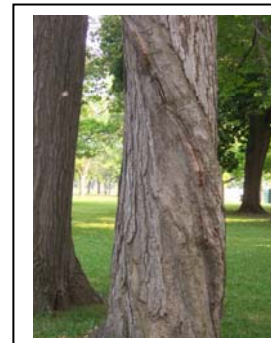
Old Cankers



Phloem Exposure



Topping/heading



Seams