A Protocol for Tree-Stability Assessments In Southern Europe

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Learning Objectives:

- Understand general means and methods used in various tree stability assessment procedures.
- Appreciate and be aware of the model components in calculating tree load, hold, and failure values.
- Improve visual tree risk assessment ability through use of a systematic process for examining trees.

Abstract

A protocol is a carefully designed plan and process. This article reviews a protocol and supporting literature for assessing tree stability. This protocol has been proven to effectively assess trees using a visual evaluation process coupled with calculated estimates of wind loads and tree stability. Large, old, and damaged trees have been successfully evaluated with this protocol. Diagnostic equipment is reserved for those rare cases where visual assessment and calculated values do not present conclusive evidence about tree stability.

The components of this protocol were gleaned from a number of researchers working with various settings and species to formulate their own assessment process. This protocol is a synthesis and an integration of a number of previously published assessment methods (following Gordon, 1999). See the Important Literature section at the end of this article for more information. By blending components, a reasonable and prudent protocol is presented which can assists arborists and tree health care providers in assessing tree stability.