



# VETCERT

**Veteran Tree Management Standards**

**Practising Level**

**Version May 2018**





**Unit number:** 1

**Unit title:** Veteran trees; recognition and values

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have knowledge of a variety of veteran trees and their values.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Recognise veteran trees in their various forms and their context.</p> <p>2. Explain the wide range of values veteran trees provide.</p>	<p>a) Provide a technical definition for a veteran tree.</p> <p>b) Show an awareness that the definition of a veteran tree might differ in legislation, in official guidance and in different countries.</p> <p>c) Identify veteran trees in the various forms in which they have developed in response to past management and/or environmental conditions.</p> <p>a) Describe the ecological, cultural heritage, social and aesthetic values these trees may provide.</p> <p>b) Converse with a wide range of audiences about the values of veteran trees, and their special management requirements.</p>



**Unit number:** 2

**Unit title:** The growth, development and aging of trees: the role of physiological function and dysfunction

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have an understanding of how trees grow, age and decay and why this is relevant to veteran tree management.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Describe how trees grow.</p> <p>2. Describe the ageing process in trees and why they can live so long.</p> <p>3. Describe the impact that damage has on a tree.</p>	<p>a) Describe the structural and functional characteristics of trees that allow them to grow indefinitely.</p> <p>b) Show an awareness of the wide range of factors which affect how trees grow, with specific reference to veteran trees.</p> <p>a) Describe the development of trees as they grow older, including hollowing.</p> <p>b) Show an awareness of the resilience and survival strategies by which veteran trees can reach great age.</p> <p>c) Show an awareness of semi-autonomous ‘functional units’ and how these affect how veteran trees should be managed.</p> <p>a) Describe the impact damage (including cutting) has on a tree.</p> <p>b) Show an awareness of a tree’s main defence mechanisms following stress or injury.</p> <p>c) Show an awareness of different characteristics of tree species relating to damage and decay.</p>



**Unit number:** 3

**Unit title:** Roots of veteran trees and the soil environment

**Unit summary:** Practitioners will have an understanding of a healthy soil environment, and how a degraded soil environment has a negative impact upon the health of veteran trees.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Describe the natural soil environment and how this affects tree health.</p> <p>2. Describe factors which can have a detrimental impact upon the soil environment around veteran trees and recognise these <i>in situ</i>.</p> <p>3. Identify how and where roots and mycorrhizal fungi grow.</p>	<p>a) Explain the importance of a healthy soil environment, and why veteran trees are susceptible to changes in this environment.</p> <p>b) Describe a variety of soil types and their influence on the rooting environment.</p> <p>a) Demonstrate an awareness of the effects of deficient or excessive nutrients, pollutants and contaminants on veteran trees.</p> <p>b) Describe different types of soil damage and demonstrate an awareness of how their actions may impact on soils.</p> <p>a) Show an awareness of common root architecture patterns and how root development is influenced by the rooting environment.</p> <p>b) Explain the relationship between roots and shoots.</p> <p>c) Show awareness of symbiotic relationships between tree roots and other organisms and the benefits they provide.</p> <p>d) Show an awareness of the problems associated with identifying actual root location.</p>



**Unit number:** 4

**Unit title:** Veteran trees as ecosystems

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have an understanding of the ecological importance of veteran trees, both individually and in the wider landscape.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Describe the wide range of ecological values of veteran trees, and how they fit into the wider ecosystem.</p>	<p>a) Show an awareness of the importance for biodiversity of abundant, good quality veteran tree habitat, continuously present for centuries.</p> <p>b) Show an awareness of the importance of the distribution of veteran trees in the landscape and the mobility of associated organisms.</p> <p>c) Demonstrate an understanding of how an individual veteran tree sits in a wider ecosystem and recognise that ecological processes are linked.</p> <p>d) Show an awareness of the complexity and diversity of habitats veteran trees can provide. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How these vary between tree species.</li> <li>• How these vary as a result of the history of the tree.</li> <li>• How these change over time.</li> <li>• That the habitat requirements vary between organisms and even the same organisms at different life stages.</li> </ul>
<p>2) Identify veteran tree habitats <i>in situ</i></p>	<p>a) Identify a range of potential microhabitats associated with veteran trees and demonstrate an understanding of the organisms that are dependent on these.</p> <p>b) Recognise decaying wood of different types and stages of decay.</p>



**Unit number:** 5

**Unit title:** Veteran trees: their value for people

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have an understanding of the social importance of veteran trees.

<b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b>	<b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b>
The practitioner is able to  1. Describe the social value of veteran trees.	<i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i>  a) Show an understanding of the social value of veteran trees and the implications for their management.  b) Show an awareness of the importance of public support for protecting and managing veteran trees.



**Unit number:** 6

**Unit title:** Veteran trees; their cultural history values

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have knowledge of the importance of the cultural and aesthetic values associated with veteran trees.

<b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b> <i>The practitioner is able to</i>	<b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b> <i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i>
1. Recognise the historical, aesthetic and cultural context in which veteran trees sit.	a) Show an awareness of the past and/or present aesthetic context that these trees sit within and how intact this is. b) Describe the cultural heritage and aesthetic values these trees may provide and the relationship with the landscape over time.



**Unit number:** 7

**Unit title:** Veteran tree survey and assessment

**Unit summary:** Practitioners will be able to undertake surveys in order to inform management of veteran trees.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Conduct a survey, in order to identify requirements for protecting veteran trees in the course of any proposed work.</p>	<p>a) Undertake a pre-work assessment of a veteran tree and its surroundings in the context of the proposed work and use the findings of this assessment to inform management.</p> <p>b) Describe how biomechanical defects may also be high value ecological features.</p> <p>c) In the course of a survey, collect sufficient information to allow veteran trees to be located by others.</p>



**Unit number:** 8

**Unit title:** Legislation and official guidance in relation to veteran trees

**Unit summary:** Practitioners will have an understanding of relevant legislation and official guidance within the country of examination, what the legislation covers, prohibits, and knowledge of how to achieve consent to undertake works.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Demonstrate an understanding of the legislation affecting veteran tree management within the country of examination.</p>	<p>a) Demonstrate awareness of legislation affecting his / her work on veteran trees.</p> <p>b) Demonstrate an awareness that if he /she works in another region/country, legislation in relation to veteran trees may differ.</p>



**Unit number:** 9

**Unit title:** Veteran tree risk management

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have an understanding of the way risk might be assessed, in accordance with legislation and recognised good practice within the country of examination.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Demonstrate an understanding of tree risk assessment, as applied to veteran trees.</p>	<p>a) Identify the difference between the potential to cause harm (hazard) and the likelihood of a given severity of harm occurring (risk).</p> <p>b) Undertake a risk assessment of a veteran tree following a suitable methodology.</p> <p>c) Identify options other than felling or cutting the tree in order to manage the risk.</p>



**Unit number:** 10

**Unit title:** Veteran trees: planning for urban development and infrastructure

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have an understanding of how veteran trees should be treated during the planning and urban development process and the threats or benefits this may bring.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Demonstrate an understanding of how veteran trees should be considered during the planning and construction process in the country of examination.</p>	<p>a) Show an understanding of the principles of tree protection on a construction or demolition site and how it applies to tree work operations.</p>



**Unit number:** 11

**Unit title:** Veteran tree management in all its aspects

**Unit summary:** Practitioners have a detailed knowledge of the veteran tree management process and apply their knowledge and skills to achieve high quality results.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Detail the basic principles behind veteran tree management.</p> <p>2. Discuss considerations for management of veteran trees and their environment.</p> <p>3. Implement specifications for improving habitats in the vicinity of veteran trees, where appropriate</p>	<p>a) Detail the overall aim of all veteran tree management and explain why it might be necessary to manage veteran trees.</p> <p>b) Describe the decision making process before carrying out any veteran tree management.</p> <p>a) Identify threats to particular veteran trees or groups of trees.</p> <p>b) Describe a specific veteran tree’s reactions to past management, and/or natural events, and how this should affect future management.</p> <p>c) Show an awareness of why techniques for veteran tree management might differ from standard arboricultural management guidance.</p> <p>d) Understand and acknowledge the limits of current scientific and professional knowledge on veteran tree management.</p> <p>a) Undertake improvements in the management of vegetation and fallen or cut wood in order to enhance habitats.</p>



<p>4. Undertake veteran tree management, in accordance with management plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the requirements of the management plan and implement them to achieve the desired objectives.</li> <li>b) Use his / her knowledge, experience and existing guidelines to define the extent of a suitable root protection area for a veteran tree and choose an appropriate method for setting one up.</li> <li>c) Undertake a pre-climb risk assessment of a veteran tree to find whether the tree is safe to climb.</li> <li>d) Select suitable tools and equipment for the operation.</li> <li>e) Prepare pre-work documentation and discuss with client and/or consultant (where applicable).</li> <li>f) Undertake an aerial inspection and record findings to inform management of tree.</li> <li>g) Select and install appropriate cabling and bracing to alleviate bio-mechanical forces acting on an identified defect.</li> <li>h) Undertake appropriate soil management in accordance with the management plan.</li> <li>i) Conduct management work whilst minimising inadvertent damage to the tree, associated species and its surroundings.</li> <li>j) Show an awareness of why it may be beneficial to phase management works.</li> <li>k) Implement good practice biosecurity measures in accordance with guidance in the country of examination.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Identify the need for, and undertake monitoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Show an awareness of the importance of monitoring in veteran tree management.</li> <li>b) Collect information to guide ongoing veteran tree management, as instructed.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Identify threats to veteran tree populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Detail the issues that impact on the sustainability of veteran tree populations.</li> </ul>



**Unit number:** 12

**Unit title:** Personal skills

**Unit summary:** Practitioners will have a strong set of transferable skills, which complement their veteran tree knowledge, to promote veteran tree management and conservation.

<p><b>Main areas of necessary skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner is able to</i></p>	<p><b>Specific aspects of skill and knowledge</b></p> <p><i>The practitioner will, in particular, be able to</i></p>
<p>1. Demonstrate effective communication skills to promote the protection of veteran trees.</p> <p>2. Demonstrate effective organisation skills.</p> <p>3. Recognise the limits of his /her professional abilities.</p>	<p>a) Communicate effectively with the general public and other stakeholders about technical information.</p> <p>b) Promote two-way communication with all stakeholders, including consultants. Take into account all relevant information provided by others in his/her work and work complementary to other professionals.</p> <p>a) Keep clear and accurate records regarding veteran tree management.</p> <p>a) Understand and acknowledge that different roles require different kinds of professional knowledge and skill, and seek assistance where necessary.</p>