



## **Summer Branch Drop**

Monkey-Do Information Note - July 2012

### **What is Summer Branch Drop?**

In the UK it has been known for large branches to be shed in calm weather conditions. This phenomenon is known as summer branch drop and it typically occurs in hot dry weather. It is not known precisely why limbs fail under these conditions but it seems likely that altered moisture content affects the ability of wood to support the load (due to differential shrinkage). High temperature is another possible factor as it increases the tendency of wood to deform under its own weight.

### **How Do We Address This Risk?**

Summer branch drop is both uncommon and unpredictable. It would be disproportionate to stop all activities near trees in hot weather to address this risk. We advocate an approach that is based on site-specific information and only following summer limb drop events. Accordingly we consider that there are two circumstances where summer limb drop should be accounted for, these are:

- 1) If a tree has shed a limb in calm and hot weather it should be considered prone to summer branch drop and it should be avoided on hot summer days.
- 2) If summer branch drop has occurred at a site then tree climbing should not be attempted at the site on that day; and if the hot spell continues, on any of the following days.