

Treatment of Public Ash Trees

Starting in 2016 the City Forester began treating ash trees as a preventative shield against emerald ash borer (EAB) for public ash trees growing in parks or in city rights of ways (boulevards). As of this writing this destructive insect has not been found in Robbinsdale but is only , but the nearest infestation is about a mile east of Victory Memorial Drive in Minneapolis. Ash trees that are in good condition and have attributes such as a full canopy, no significant dieback, not currently suppressed by other trees and exhibit healthy branching structure are injected with an insecticide called TREE-äge, which makes the tree “toxic” to EAB larvae and adults. A single treatment is guaranteed for 2 years, but it is likely that a 3 year rotation is adequate unless insect pressure becomes very high. This pesticide remains wholly within the tree canopy, and because ash trees are wind pollinated TREE-äge poses no threat to bees or other pollinating insects.

The relative cost of a single treatment is a tiny fraction of what it would cost to remove a given tree, and removal of a mature healthy ash tree eliminates all of the valuable non-market benefits such as shade, stormwater interception, wildlife habitat, increased property values and aesthetics. Since larger trees provide greater degree of these benefits, ash trees that are 8” in diameter at breast height or larger are candidates for treatment. Ash trees that are smaller than 8” or are in declining health or otherwise exhibit problematic branching structure are not treated and will be removed at a later time. Any ash tree that is removed will be replaced with a tree planted from the city gravelbed nursery. Every treated public ash tree is marked with a round tag stamped “2016 EAB”.

Proactive treatment of ash trees prior to EAB infestation is critical since ash trees killed by EAB quickly become very brittle and breakdown rapidly, which poses significant risks to life and property. If you have an ash tree in your yard it is important to consider either treating or removal. There is a 100% chance an untreated ash tree will be killed by EAB once it is infested, since native ash trees have no natural resistance to this insect. By the time EAB-caused decline symptoms become visible it is often too late for treatment and prompt removal is the only option. The City licenses tree service contractors and a number of these companies provide treatment services for private ash trees, and this list can be found on the forestry webpage. If you have any questions about emerald ash borer or about treatment options please contact City Forester Stephan Papiz at 763-531-1273 or at spapiz@ci.robbinsdale.mn.us.