

Treeways

2022 - 1

Emerald Ash Borer Update

Most unprotected ash trees in Sunfish Lake are infested with emerald ash borer to some degree now. This will become very obvious as more and more trees exhibit “blonding” due to woodpecker activity as they search for EAB larvae in tree branches and trunks. **You do not need City Forester approval to remove and emerald ash borer (EAB) infested tree whether dead or alive.** Infested ash trees may be removed at your convenience.

An ash tree dying due to an EAB infestation is best removed soon after it is visibly infested (blonding) and at that point the tree is likely beyond effective pesticide treatment to save it. EAB trees become brittle as they die. They may even drop major limbs unexpectedly within 10 months to a year following death. Arborists or other tree care professionals will not climb a nearly dead ash because of the likelihood of major limbs falling unpredictably so **dead ash trees should not be climbed for any reason.** Infested ash trees along several City streets have been marked for removal in winter 2022. They are marked with a red ring and a number.

How to remove a dead ash tree? Whether you hire a professional or do it yourself extra care must be taken. Tree lean, size, wind, electrical wires and the possibility of hurting people, pets or valuable property with falling debris must be considered. **Do not learn how to operate a brand-new chainsaw by cutting down a huge tree.** When using a chain saw, wearing ear and eye protection, gloves, hard hat and chainsaw chaps is important. Please be careful! Chain saws are made to cut through wood and they can cut through muscle and bone instantly causing terrible wounds.

If space is available for the whole tree to fall safely, the tree may be dropped with a series of basal cuts. If there is not enough room to safely drop the entire tree, then dismantling from the top down from a mechanical lift may be an alternative. There are other possibilities, but they should only be done by a professional arborist. Winter is the preferred time to remove an EAB infested ash.

Debris processed through a chipper or burning kills the EAB larvae still living within the wood. You may use the logs for firewood locally since a few more beetles escaping from firewood will not change the fact that all our untreated green ash, white ash, and black ash in Sunfish Lake will soon be gone. **Do not however take EAB infested firewood up to the lake** because that is illegal and does spread EAB to new locations in the state that are not yet infested! **If you decide to have a bonfire to dispose woody debris, please contact the City Forester at 612-803-9033 to get a burning permit. Burning permits are available during times most of the year.**