

Frequently Asked Questions: Emerald Ash Borer

What is EAB?

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive pest new to our area. The pest is native of Asia and was most likely brought to this country in shipping crate lumber. This pest lays eggs on ash tree specimens (the only species it currently infects). The larvae burrow into the vascular tissue of the trees, just below the surface of the bark. The larvae feed on this tissue during the course of their development. The damaged tissue is that which feeds the tree. The trees can no longer provide food for themselves, causing their demise and ultimate death. All ash tree species are susceptible and will most likely fail within the next few years. Ash specimens are no longer a viable species for our area.

I have been seeing EAB every summer for years; why is it a problem now?

EAB can be confused with other, less impactful, insects such as Japanese beetle. EAB is a different species and a recent immigrant to the United States. The impacts of this new pest have never been experienced in our area.

Why is this the first time I am hearing about this?

EAB has been in national headlines for the last few years. It has been the subject of financing and budgets in the state for several years. The first infestation was found in the Village in 2011, at which time local newspapers gave it much attention (something they continue to do). Much information on this pest can be found on line.

Where did it come from?

EAB is a native species of Asia and most likely came to this country in shipping materials.

Where is EAB?

EAB is spreading throughout the United States, radially, from what is thought to be the original infestation area near Detroit, Michigan. All areas of the Village have been found to have EAB infestations.

What are the treatment options?

While there are several treatment options available, the only treatments the Village is allowing are injectable insecticides. The injectable products must be applied by a professional and are not available for sale to the general public. Of the many treatment options available, Village arborists observe that most products are not performing with overwhelmingly satisfactory results. You should consult a professional, preferably a Certified Arborist, to discuss treatment options, costs, and effectiveness of the treatments.

Is the Village treating ash trees for EAB?

No. With the lack of proven success of treatments, along with long-term treatment costs and ash tree species populations within the Village, treatment is not a viable option, nor does the Village arboricultural staff believe it is a good long-term solution to providing a healthy and viable Village forest.

Can I treat my parkway tree?

Yes. Even though the Village is not treating trees, the home owner may opt to treat the tree. Information is available through Public Works on treatment options and if your tree qualifies for treatment. All Village owned tree have been rated based on health, and some trees may not meet the criteria for treatment. If you would like to know if your tree qualifies, please call Public Works.

Should I treat my privately-owned ash trees?

This is a personal choice. There are many web sites that can inform you on every aspect of this pest. We suggest you invest your support of information found on resource web sites such as <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>. EAB web sites hosted by not-for-profit or governmental entities tend to give you the most straightforward information. A permit is required to treat any private tree and can be issued at Public Works at no cost.

The parkway tree looks so healthy; how do you know it is infested?

There are several symptoms and signs that show us where the pests are. Primary identifiers are split bark, d-shaped exit holes, and woodpecker damage. Bark tends to split on the smaller trees a season after feeding has begun. When the bark splits, you can visibly see the feeding galleries. D-shaped exit holes from adult emergence are also an identifier. While many pests can leave exit holes, EAB has a distinct size and shaped exit wound. For mature species, our greatest telling damage is the presence of woodpeckers. As EAB larvae mature, woodpeckers find the larvae irresistible and feed primarily on these during the fall and winter months. Heavily infested trees are riddled with holes from this feeding activity, although only a handful of wounds on a tree can be an excellent identifier of the earliest stage of a big infestation. Heavily infested trees can appear to be perfectly healthy, unless you know what you are looking for. Once a tree is infested, it is a matter of a brief period of time before the tree will fail. As in human healthcare, early diagnosis can be made when good health seems obvious. Seeming health does not negate the problem, or its dire prognosis.

Does this insect harm any other trees?

It is understood that this insect currently only infests ash tree specimens.

How many Village ash trees are there?

There are currently over 1,321 ash trees located on parkways (road rights-of-way) and Village-owned parcels. This does not include ash trees located on privately owned parcels.

Will the Village contact me before removing my infested parkway tree(s)?

Prior to removal, a letter will be mailed to the Home Owner with information regarding EAB and removal. The tree to be removed will be marked with a black "X" and will be removed 7-10 days after the notice is received.

Why is there a black "X" on my tree?

Typically, a black "X" is used to identify trees for removal by the Street Division. These trees may not be just EAB related trees, but any tree that are in need for removal for various reasons.

Will the Village inspect privately-owned trees?

The Village has historically provided minimal inspection and advice as it relates to tree issues. This is always a courtesy, and a service which we are grateful to supply, as time allows.

Will the Village remove my privately-owned tree(s)?

No. Private property maintenance issues are just that, private.

Why does an infected ash tree need to be removed; can we wait until the tree is dead?

When a tree is found to be infested, its expedient removal is recommended in order to prevent the pests from reproducing and increasing the intensity and spread of the problem. Removal and appropriate disposal is consistent with good forestry practice and is currently mandated by the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Are we removing all of the ash trees in the neighborhood?

As previously noted, the ash species is no longer viable in our area. While we are not systematically removing all ash trees from a specific area, the infestation increases each year, and trees are removed as they are identified as infested. Infestations tend to spread contiguously, so while it is not our intent to systematically remove all trees from a specific area, the infestation tends to evolve in this way. Eventually all of the Village-owned parkway ash trees will be removed by nature of their infestation.

If you identify an infected ash tree on my parkway, will you remove all of the ash trees on my parkway?

We only remove trees as we find them to be infested, or as requested by the adjacent parcel owner. All residents with Village-owned parkway ash trees are allowed to request the pre-harvesting of the trees in order to give in to the inevitable. Trees that are found to be a hazard or in failing health will also be removed.

Will the Village remove the stump once the tree is removed?

Yes. Stumps are added to a list and ground (removed), hopefully, within a few weeks of the removal of the tree. The area will then be restored with topsoil and seed the following week, depending on weather.

Why do the plants, edging, and landscape block need to be removed prior to stump removal?

Units used for grinding stumps are essentially large-scale chainsaws with teeth that are intended for wood and topsoil only. Blocks, edging, and landscaping prohibit the unit from accessing the stump and can cause damage to the machine. These unapproved parkway installations must be removed prior to removal of the stump.

Will the Village remove plants, edging, and landscape block prior to stump grinding?

No. These improvements are installed without permission from the Village (and are actually bad for the trees). Village staff time will not be utilized for their removal, nor will staff be responsible for damage that may occur to these personal items during the removal process. Therefore, the stump grinding and tree replacement process will not take place until the parcel owner causes their removal.

Will the Village replace the trees that are removed from the parkway?

No, but the Village does offer a 50/50 tree replacement program that allows residents to purchase parkway trees at 50% of the cost and the Village will pay the remainder. Information of the 50/50 Tree program can be found [here](#).

How long do I have to wait for a replacement tree?

Trees for the 50/50 Tree program are planted in the spring and the fall. Depending on the timing of the tree removal and ordering of trees, the tree replacement may have to wait until the following season. Also, certain tree species can only be planted at certain times of the year.

What will be the size of the replacement tree?

Trees can be ordered at different sizes per residents request; however the Village will only pay for 50% of the cost of a 2" diameter tree. Anything larger would be at the cost of the resident. See [50/50 Tree program](#) for further details.

Can I plant my own tree?

The Village discourages home owners from planting trees in the parkway, but we are aware that this occurs. The home owner must be aware that once the installation takes place, the tree becomes the property of the Village, who then assumes ownership rights and responsibilities. If for any reason the Village would need to remove the tree, the Village does retain the right to do so.

Will the Village reimburse me if I plant my own tree?

No. Once the decision is made to plant your own parkway tree, you have stepped outside of the Village program and processes which are designed for best and sequential use of tree program funding.

Can I choose what type of tree will be installed?

The Village typically provides homeowners with several choices of species for installation in the Village-owned parcel adjacent to their property. These species are chosen based upon appropriateness for parkway installation, viability of the species, availability, proven success, and diversity. While you may not be given the ability to choose a specific species, you are typically given a choice from among several quality species.

Why can't I choose the same tree as all of my neighbors?

Diversity in the urban forest is important in providing for its future success. As we learned with Dutch elm disease and are now learning with EAB, the planting of a single species in mass quantities is a poor urban forestry practice. Once a species becomes susceptible to a new insect or disease, the community suffers unnecessary and substantial losses of the environmental, monetary, and aesthetic benefits these trees provide. We, therefore, strive to provide adequate diversity when choosing the plants to offer for replanting. These trees are typically not the standard trees you may see on the street or at your neighbor's home. This is a purposeful decision. Usually the trees you are most familiar with are the ones that are over planted community wide. Adding more trees to their numbers will only cause us to be more vulnerable to the same issues we are currently facing. Trees offered in the program have fewer total numbers throughout the community, and only a certain number of each tree species are available for planting each season, which provides for greater community species diversity and promotes forest durability.

Is this going to cost me anything?

No. If you allow the Village to follow the process that is currently in place, failed Village-owned parkway trees are removed, the stumps are ground out, and the site is restored (with topsoil and seed).