

**University Heights: Emerald Ash Borer Report, February 2014.
Submitted by Virginia Miller**

Our situation in UH in regards to the EAB is not as dire as many larger towns in Iowa. Our population of ash trees on the city ROW represents only about 10% of our canopy, or about 20 trees total. Recommendations on what to do about the EAB are a little different for homeowners than they are for municipalities.

City Trees:

For University Heights in particular, our best course of action will be to maintain a low threshold for removal of ash trees over the next few years, and remove them as they become infested, and begin to lose limbs and die. Prophylactic removal of ash trees is probably not necessary in most cases, because even if all of our trees all die at once, it is still a relatively small number. Cities that have tens of thousands of ash trees have often decided to remove them in advance of the EAB infestation, to spread the work out over as many years as possible. However, currently and over the next few years here in University Heights, if an ash tree loses a limb, needs major pruning, or is just not an attractive specimen, removal and re-planting of a different species should be considered.

Some municipalities with large ash tree populations are choosing treatments for EAB as a stop-gap measure to slow the loss of trees while the dying ash tree population is removed and replaced. University Heights should not likely consider treating for EAB for any ash trees on the city ROW, as our ash trees are fairly well dispersed around town, and not of a great quantity. Our best plan for dealing with EAB as a city is to commence planting additional street trees of a variety of species and genera now, and anticipate a budget for removal of up to \$15,000-\$20,000 in the coming years.

Trees on private property:

Homeowners with ash trees on their property may wish to save their trees by treating with insecticides. Homeowners need to compare the cost of yearly treatment against the cost of possible eventual removal and replacement, as well as consider how much they value the shade and beauty their ash trees provide. Trees have real benefits, see the link below. It is recommended that anyone with ash tree on their property consider planting additional trees from a variety of genera as soon as possible, so that if they lose their ash tree(s) to EAB they will have replacements already growing.

Treatment should be started once the EAB is found within 15 miles of University Heights. Currently, the closest EAB reports come from Mechanicsville, 31 miles away. That may be too close for comfort for some homeowners who will want to treat this spring. Insecticide treatment should be done once a year in April or May.

Depending on the size of the tree, homeowners may be able to apply the insecticide themselves, but larger trees will need professional application. Yearly insecticide treatment will be about 95% effective in saving the tree, so a small number of treated trees will still die. Treatment will have to continue indefinitely.

Safety:

One important consideration for homeowners is that removal of trees once they have died from EAB can be more expensive than removing healthy trees. EAB infested trees turn brittle quickly and dead limbs may have to be lowered with ropes rather than allowed to drop, as they shatter when they hit the ground. Households with limited funds may find it more affordable to remove their ash trees early. Another consideration is that tree removal companies are fairly busy at present, and it can already take 2-3 months to schedule a tree removal. Once EAB hits fully, the delay in removal could be longer. If a homeowner has an ash tree that hangs over a house or garage, they may want to look into pruning or early removal to keep their house safe.

Will the recent cold slow the spread of the EAB?

There have been some reports recently that the extremely cold snap of weather we experienced recently killed all the EAB larvae – which may be true in some parts of Minnesota where these reports were originating (MPR did a few stories on the radio) but arborists in Iowa say that we did not receive low enough temps for a prolonged enough period of time. Surely some larvae did die across the Midwest, hopefully enough to slow the progression of the infestation, but not enough to stop it.

What to do just now?

The big question to start with is: Do I have an ash tree in my yard? Ash trees are fairly easy to spot in the winter when they are not in leaf, as they have a distinctive bark pattern and branching pattern. The bark often breaks in diamond shaped patterns, and sometimes has a greenish coating on the outside. The branch pattern is opposite – the stems join at the branch opposite from each other.

If you need help with tree identification in your yard, you may be able to schedule a consultation with either the DNR district forester or with a private tree care company. I would be happy to visit your house myself to help, with the caveat that you get what you pay for, and my opinion is free.

Online identification guides:

<http://www.emeraldashborer.info/files/e2892ash.pdf>

http://treedoctor.anr.msu.edu/ash/ashtree_id.html

Resources and recommended reading:

Iowatreepests.com

http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2014/01-17/eab_consumer.html

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/pme/emeraldashborer.html>

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/home/ctl/detail/mid/2822/itemid/1592>

<http://www.kwwl.com/story/24399660/2014/01/08/cold-snap-will-not-kill-emerald-ash-borer-larvae-in-iowa>

<http://www.npr.org/2014/01/10/261435111/the-upside-of-the-bitter-cold-it-kills-bugs-that-kill-trees>

<http://www.emeraldashborer.info/index.cfm#sthash.m81Lth05.dpbs>

A very thorough report on EAB done for a small town in Wisconsin, lots of helpful information and ideas:

<http://www.littlechutewi.org/DocumentCenter/View/1732>

Tree replacement list:

http://www.iowatreepests.com/documents/Recommended_Trees_Iowa.pdf

Trees have benefits:

<http://www.treebenefits.com>

Tree care companies in the Iowa City area recommended by Terry Robinson, Iowa City forestry department:

Total Tree Care – ISA certified
Noels Tree and Crane Service
Black Squirrel Tree Care
Quality Care
Tree Care LLC
Dalton Tree Service
TreeSavers – does EAB insecticide treatment