

DATE: September 17, 2018
FROM: Marlboro Shade Tree Committee (STC)
SUBJECT: Ash Tree Notice / Emerald Ash Borer

The Marlboro Shade Tree Committee (STC) is an official board established by the Township of Marlboro comprised of resident volunteers who advise the Township regarding the regulation of shade and ornamental trees and shrubbery, including the planting, trimming, spraying, care and protection thereof.

This letter is to inform you of an invasive tree pest called the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) which has spread into Monmouth County. The EAB will kill 99.7% of all existing ash trees. The Committee has identified Ash trees in certain neighborhoods as depicted on the map (see <http://www.marlboro-nj.gov/EAB/114746-AshTreePlot.pdf>) which may be subject to EAB in the coming years, if not already.

EAB is of great concern to all residents because:

- Insects bore into host trees and quickly kill the trees within a few years
- Dead ash trees are very brittle and will fall apart
- Ash will all succumb to the beetle at approximately the same time
- Massive tree failures may create an increase in cost of tree removal
- Sudden increase in street noise and heat may occur from loss of shade
- Storm water management issues may arise
- The aesthetics of properties may be affected

The STC is writing to encourage residents to be proactive and prepare for the EAB threat. There are two (2) options to consider: removal of ash trees or systemic insecticide treatments. Further details can be found on the back of this letter.

The STC is also exploring the feasibility of replacing ash trees lost to the EAB within the Township. Please email us if you are interested in a new street tree to replace an ash, or if you have any questions or concerns at garden@marlboro-nj.gov.

For updates, including various resources concerning the EAB, please refer to the Committee's website at http://www.marlboro-nj.gov/STC_main.html.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive pest from Asia and was first found in Michigan in 2002. Since its discovery in the United States, it has killed millions of Ash trees in that area and has since spread into New Jersey in May 2014 when it was discovered in Somerset County. The Forest Service has been monitoring its spread throughout the state. Its presence has already been noted throughout the area, including Marlboro Township.

This insect bores into Ash trees, killing them quickly and leaving behind a dead brittle tree that is very dangerous to remove. EAB is a very aggressive feeder with few natural predators. Once the beetle has infested the tree, it is typically dead within three (3) years. By the time an EAB infestation is identified, it is often too late to save the host tree.

Ash trees have a compound leaf with 5-7 leaflets and a distinct diamond pattern bark. Just like Maple trees, Ash trees have opposite branching habits. The leaves themselves will turn either yellow (Green Ash) or purplish-red (White Ash) in the fall.

If the Ash trees on your property are in poor condition, the trees should be removed as soon as possible, even before EAB has been confirmed. Once the beetle has infested your neighborhood, all the trees will decline and eventually die at the same time. As the demand to remove the trees quickly intensifies, the removal cost to do so might increase. Removal costs might also increase due to the dangerous nature of removing these brittle trees and the amount of wood that will need to be disposed of properly. It is recommended to budget for these removals now.

On the other hand, if your tree is in good condition and between 15"-30" diameter, treatment might be an option. Ash trees can be injected with a systemic insecticide by a licensed tree expert or technician in the spring, once every 2-3 years. This treatment will need to continue for approximately 15 years or more, to ensure the pest has been fully eradicated from the area.

Unfortunately, these are the only viable options to deal with EAB at this time. We strongly recommend reviewing your options carefully and understanding the risks and financial burden associated with any course of action you may choose. Ultimately, when the infestation occurs, the trees will be required to be removed as they will be deemed hazardous. However, a proactive decision is your choice, whether you decide to remove the tree earlier or treat it with insecticides.