

CITY OF FOND DU LAC – PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Date: April 15th, 2015
To: News Media
From: Jordan Skiff, Director of Public Works
Re: Emerald Ash Borer Message



The City of Fond du Lac discovered an ash tree infested by the Emerald Ash Borer in the southwest part of the City last week. DNR officials have confirmed that it is the Borer. Although an EAB infestation was found just south of the City limits in December, 2013, this is the first confirmed find within the City.

The discovery represents a significant concern to the City, as a large number of public and private trees within the Fond du Lac community are ash trees. The Emerald Ash Borer has been found to be 100% fatal to untreated ash trees. The City has been preemptively removing ash trees for several years to prepare for an infestation. Additionally, several dozen citizens have elected to chemically treat public or private ash trees at their home or business. Despite these efforts, approximately 5,000 publicly owned ash trees on terraces and in parks—as well as thousands of ash trees on private property—are likely to be destroyed by the Borer over the next decade.

The City will continue to implement a multi-faceted plan to manage the infestation.

First, the City will continue to selectively remove as many ash trees as the budget and available City crews will allow. Despite our desire to see many ash trees saved, the reality is that we don't have the budget to treat 5,000 ash trees. These efforts will now focus more heavily in the area of the known infestation to try to slow the spread from this presumed epicenter. We will continue, however, to space out ash removals and plant new trees where possible to lessen or delay a harsh impact on any one neighborhood.

Second, we will chemically treat as many ash trees as we can afford to, and will continue to work with any citizens who are interested in having their terrace or private trees treated. A trunk injection form of chemical treatments has been shown to be almost 100% effective in protecting ash trees against EAB, and the earlier a tree is treated, the greater its chance of survival. We have received a competitive quote from a contractor, and the cost to treat a tree is about \$120 for an average (15" diameter) tree every two to three years. Other types of treatments are available which may be less expensive and easier to apply, but which may not be effective for as long a period.

Third, we will continue to remove ash trees as part of other projects, as appropriate. For example, if a street project will impact terrace trees, ash trees will likely be removed as part of that work. Conversely, we will attempt to preserve trees of other species as much as possible.

Fourth, we will continue to plant replacement trees as the budget allows. As the infestation progresses and ash trees start to die in greater numbers, stump grinding and replacing trees may be deferred until a later year.

Fifth, we may need to create a marshalling yard to handle the additional wood waste that an EAB infestation will generate. Historically, wood from the trees our crews cut has been taken by residents for firewood, eliminating the need for taxpayers to pay for disposal. As wood quantities increase, supply may exceed this demand. If a marshalling yard becomes necessary, the City will provide more information to the public about its location, availability and limitations.

Sixth, we need to continue to remind residents of our quarantine requirements. Fond du Lac County was placed under quarantine when Wisconsin's first infestation was found in neighboring Washington County in 2008. A quarantine requires that wood should not be moved into a non-quarantined area. At this time, nearby counties Marquette, Green Lake and Waushara counties are not quarantined. Certified contractors are able to move wood under certain conditions, making sure that the wood they transport is not able to carry the Borer with it. Even moving firewood *within* a quarantined area should be minimized, as this may move the beetle from a part of the area that is infested to a part that is not.

A public information meeting will be scheduled within the next several weeks to provide more details to residents about the infestation and the City's response.

Residents may contact the City Arborist at 322-3594 with questions or to find out more about treating their ash trees. The Parks web site also contains EAB information at <http://www.fdl.wi.gov/departments.iml?DeptID=21&DeptPage=182>.