



CITY OF FORT DODGE PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY

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MEDIA RELEASE

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RE: EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB)

On July 1, 2020, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship announced that the emerald ash borer had been confirmed in Webster County. The City of Fort Dodge Forestry department has been working diligently for the past 6 years to prepare for the arrival of this invasive species. “We’ve known for several years it was just a matter of time before the infestation made it to Fort Dodge,” Parks and Forestry Superintendent Kevin Lunn says. “The Forestry department made the decision to proactively remove Ash trees from right-of-ways (ROW) in preparation of its arrival. A dead Ash tree is brittle and has the potential to be very dangerous.”

The emerald ash borer is an exotic insect pest from Asia that was first discovered in the United States in 2002. The flattened, creamy white larval stage feeds below the bark of ash trees and cuts off the living, water and nutrient conducting vessels causing tree death. EAB colonizes the top of ash trees first, then moves down the tree. Trees don’t die immediately; it generally takes two to four years before it totally dies. For trees already infested, as long as there is less than 30% die-back in the treetop, the tree can be treated.

Lunn wants homeowners to know that treatment for the EAB is not a cure, but, in most cases, it will prolong the life of your ash tree as long as the treatment is administered every one to two years, depending on the chemicals used. “Homeowners in Fort Dodge should start a plan for ash trees on their property. Now that the EAB has been confirmed in Webster County, most ash trees will begin to show signs of stress in three to five years or sooner,” Lunn says.

To date, the City of Fort Dodge Forestry department has removed almost 1,900 ash trees from city ROW. Residents who have chosen to treat their ROW trees have until August of 2021 to have a professional administer the initial treatment for EAB if they wish to keep their trees. Proof of treatment is required to remain on the list of trees not to be removed. However, homeowners are reminded that ash trees on the city ROW that have been treated do remain property of the city. Treatment failure could lead to the removal of dying or dangerous trees by the Forestry department.

You can learn more about the EAB on the Iowa State Extension website, www.extension.iastate.edu/psep/emerald-ash-borer-eab. For questions about ash trees located on ROW, please contact the Forestry department at (515) 576-7237, extension 3 or via email, forestry@fortdodgeiowa.org.