

More EAB-infested ash trees found; Minneapolis Park Board to begin removing trees March 26

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Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has taken a bite out of the Prospect Park East River Road neighborhood of Minneapolis. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) confirmed that a total of 15 ash trees in Tower Hill Park are infested with EAB; 14 of the trees are located in the park and one on the boulevard of University Avenue. An additional 25 suspect trees were found in the park. The MDA's assessment comes after EAB was found in four trees in the park in late February.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) Forestry Division plans to remove the EAB-infested and suspected trees on Friday, March 26, and Monday, March 29. Most tree debris will be immediately ground into woodchips that are small enough to be in compliance with state standards. Tree debris that is too large to chip will be processed at a certified recycling facility.

According to Ralph Sievert, Director of Forestry, most of the infested trees in the park are on a wooded hillside and are small diameter wild-grown trees, so removing them will not make much of a visual impact. "Removing these trees will actually help the other park trees by giving them more space and light to grow," Sievert said.

The tree removal at Tower Hill Park is being funded from a portion of a grant that the MPRB received from the MDA in January. The \$98,400 grant covers the cost of removing ash trees, grinding the stumps and replanting with a diverse variety of trees.

EAB is an invasive beetle that kills ash trees. Its larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree's inner bark. The metallic-green adult beetles are a half inch long, and are active from May to September. They can fly up to two miles a year. Signs of infestation include one-eighth inch, D-shaped exit holes in ash tree bark and serpentine-shaped tunnels under the bark.

EAB has already killed more than 40 million ash trees nationwide, most in southeast Michigan and Ohio. There is currently no known cure. The Minneapolis urban forest includes 38,000 ash trees in the public boulevards (19 percent of total trees). Twenty-one percent—over 200,000 of all public and private trees—are ash.

EAB was first confirmed in the Twin Cities in May 2009 in the South Saint Anthony Park neighborhood in St. Paul. As a result, a quarantine was placed on Ramsey and Hennepin counties to help slow the spread of EAB to other areas. The quarantine restricts the movement of products such as ash trees, ash limbs and firewood. Details on the quarantine can be found online at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/pestmanagement/eab/quarantinefaq.aspx>.

Doing its part to maintain and preserve the city's priceless urban forest, the MPRB Forestry Division is responsible for the public trees on Minneapolis city streets and parkland. It monitors the planting, pruning and removal of trees on public property, which includes 6,732 acres of parkland. This year the Forestry Division will plant over 4,000 trees city-wide to replace trees that have been lost due to storms, Dutch elm disease and other causes.

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