

Elm Tree Injections



A Fact Sheet for residents of Minneapolis, MN

THE PROVEN METHOD FOR DED CONTROL

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is a fungal disease that kills predominantly American Elm trees. Since it first entered the United States in around 1930 it has killed hundreds of thousands of trees. It is inevitable that over time DED will continue to reduce the population of elms in Minneapolis.

For decades the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) has successfully controlled the number of elms that die from DED. This has been done through a process called the Sanitation Removal Method (SRM). The SRM involves the quick identification of diseased elms followed by their prompt removal and disposal. Such trees may be on either public or private property. Slowing the losses from DED makes it less expensive to complete removals and ensures that newly planted trees will have good age distribution.

Elm bark beetles spread the DED fungus. By removing an infected elm, the elm bark beetle is not able to breed in a dying tree. The SRM controls DED by controlling the beetle population. This was learned through years of scientific research in cities that experienced large losses in a short period of time. It is important to know that Minneapolis would not have as many elm trees as it does if it were not for the SRM.

After diseased trees are removed it is important to plant new trees as quickly as possible. Minneapolis has planted far more trees than it has removed since initiating the SRM. New trees are chosen from many different species. Increasing the diversity of new trees is a natural way of guarding against another tree pest that may arrive in the future.

Residents occasionally ask why the MPRB does not inject public elm trees. The reason involves the large population of elms that the MPRB is managing. Injecting every public elm would be both cost prohibitive and impractical. Promoting injections would create doubt and confusion about the efficacy of the SRM. For these reasons, the MPRB does not promote nor discourage the injection of elm trees. However, injecting elm trees does have a place in urban forest management. If property owners wish to undertake this task, the MPRB works cooperatively with them.

TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES

If you are contemplating having an elm tree injected to either prevent or control DED, there are some things you should know. The companies that perform this service typically follow two differing philosophies. The first is that by injecting a healthy tree it is possible to prevent the tree from getting DED. The other is that DED can be stopped in a tree after it is infected. Whichever scenario fits your tree of concern, it is up to you in consultation with a consulting arborist to determine the best course of action to take with an approved company.

The chemicals that are injected into elm trees are called fungicides. A reputable company will guarantee the success of the injection or macro-infusion for 3 years. If an injected tree becomes infected with DED within that time frame, the contractor should refund the cost of the injection. This is why a reputable injection contractor will only inject a tree that is a good candidate for the process. For long-term success an injected tree will need to be re-injected every 3 years. The cost of injection is based on the diameter of the tree and typically ranges from \$300 to \$600 per treatment.

COMPANIES THAT DO INJECTIONS

There are a number of companies that inject elm trees. You can find them via the Internet or phone directory yellow pages. You may want to see if a contractor employs ISA Certified Arborists by checking with the Minnesota Society of Arboriculture at www.isa-msa.org. An ISA Certified Arborist is an experienced professional who has passed an extensive examination covering all aspects of tree care. For more detailed information on hiring a contractor, the MPRB has created a fact sheet entitled "Choosing a Tree Care Professional" that is available online or by calling the number below.

PRIVATE VERSUS PUBLIC TREES

There is a difference between a tree that is on private property and one that is on public property. Public trees are those that are growing on boulevards, between the curb and sidewalk, and in parks. Private trees are on the property owner's side of the public right of way. With private trees you may pay a contractor to inject your tree or you may do it yourself. Public trees are protected by ordinances so work on them must conform to the rules and regulations of the MPRB.

Any work that is performed on a public tree requires a free permit from the MPRB. Residents and neighborhood organizations that wish to inject a public elm must do so using a company approved by the MPRB. Permits will only be issued to an approved company and not to the property owner. This ensures that injections are done properly while making the permitting process efficient. Residents and neighborhood organizations are not allowed to perform injections on public trees using do-it-yourself kits.

Permitted companies are responsible for any pruning and disposal of infected wood that they prescribe as treatment for public trees. This may require a separate permit from the MPRB. The MPRB will not determine if a tree is a good candidate for injection. Private companies are best suited to perform this service because they possess the expertise to make such a determination.

It is important to note that the permit system overseen by the MPRB is designed to facilitate the injection process. As such the MPRB assumes no responsibility for the success or failure of trees that are injected. Elms that are determined to have DED following injection will still have their removal enforced by the MPRB.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about DED and how the MPRB takes care of our urban forest, visit our website at www.minneapolisparks.org or call the Forestry Section at 612-370-4900.

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