

City Fights Emerald Ash Borer Damage

Posted on [September 24, 2012](#) by [Ken Gray](#)

This is a release from River Councillor [Maria McRae](#):

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Mayor and Members of Council

Councillor Maria McRae

Chair – Environment Committee

Council Update – Emerald Ash Borer

Management Strategy

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On July 11, 2012, Council unanimously approved an additional \$1 million in funding for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Strategy. This investment was used to increase the number of tree injections and the number of trees planted in 2012.

I am pleased to provide you with information regarding work that has taken place since the additional investment was approved by Council and the next steps in the fight to protect Ottawa's tree canopy from this invasive beetle.

Tree Planting and Community Outreach

EAB has a devastating impact on the City's forest canopy through the inevitable loss of trees and the sustainability of our urban and rural forest infrastructure relies heavily on the replacement of removed trees. To that end, Forestry Services continues to inter-plant and replace Ash trees in infested locations.

In the spring of 2012, 1,267 new trees of various species were planted along streets and in parks where a large percentage of Ash trees are present. This fall, including the additional funding approved by Council, Forestry Services will plant an additional 2,700 trees, for a total of 3,967 new tree plantings in 2012. In response to community suggestions, Forestry Services will plant 50mm caliper trees instead of 25mm caliper trees. The planting program will minimize the impact on our forest cover and these new trees will have more time to establish themselves prior to the removal of dying Ash trees.

This fall, staff are also implementing a new notification process to inform residents about inter-planting of trees on residential streets. The notification process is two-fold:

- The City will mail a general notification (see Appendix A) to all residents on the street where the inter-planting will take place, providing information on the City's EAB strategy and links to the City's website.
- Residents, whose City Ash tree was selected for inter-planting, will receive a 2nd notification prior to tree planting (see Appendix B). This notification will be delivered directly to residents and a small compostable lawn sign will mark the approximate planting location of the tree. This will allow the resident to visualize the location of the tree and provide the anticipated timeline for tree installation and future maintenance.

Finally, this additional investment is being used to design tree planting plans for communities that have yet to receive new trees, to inform residents in these communities regarding upcoming changes in their neighbourhood and to engage the community in responding and taking tangible action to manage and mitigate the impact of EAB. The goal is to raise public awareness, engage more communities and involve residents in the process. Later this fall, my office and Forestry Services will work closely with your offices and your communities to share the proposed plans and to gather feedback from our residents.

Tree Injections – A New Tool for This Fight

Tree Injections have formed part of the City's EAB strategy since its inception in 2008. Forestry Services continues to evaluate and add Ash trees to the injection program every year. In 2012, 1,250 new trees were added into the program. With the new funding, an additional 262 trees were injected this year, for a total of 2,309 trees in the injection program. It is expected that by the end of 2013, the total number of City-owned Ash trees in the injection program will be between 4,000 and 5,000. This number will vary with the evolution of fieldwork and the refinement of the City's tree inventory taking place later this year.

Forestry Services staff assess trees before deciding if they are a good candidate for treatment. Assessments of Ash trees for the 2013 injection program are underway, and the assessment criteria include: size, condition, location and number of Ash trees in the area. Staff are discovering that some trees are too infected to be treated, in poor condition due to other health factors such as storm damage, or in poor locations such as under utility wires.

This summer, in an ongoing effort to assist with furthering EAB treatment, the City partnered with industry researchers on the use of additional insecticide and injection system. Confidor, approved by Health Canada for use against EAB, is being used on a trial basis on a small number of trees in Ottawa.

This trial program will allow researchers to assess the effectiveness of this insecticide and the injection system on Ash trees in [Ontario](#). Confidor must be applied every two years. This product is used in EAB programs in the United States and Ottawa is one of the first of two municipalities in Canada to investigate its use as part of our EAB strategy.

Wood Handling and Disposal – The City Has a New Partner

In response to the Request for Proposal circulated this spring to find qualified vendors to sort and process Ash wood materials into marketable products, the successful bidder, Ottawa Cedar Lumber, was selected and the final sign-off for compliance was received from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The goal of this program is to establish an Ash tree disposal process for the City, private sector and private residents at fair market value.

Ottawa Cedar Lumber, a family owned and operated company in the forestry business for the last 8 years, operates a sawmill facility in the east end of the City, producing rough cut and finished wood products. The company also produces and sells large volumes of wood chips.

The existing equipment, facilities and storage capacity will allow them to handle and process Ash wood logs from EAB infested Ash trees.

It is expected that this wood processing will reduce the City's current tipping fee by 30%, as well as reduce the number of times that the City has to handle the wood material. In addition, by moving the wood directly to a processing site, we are minimizing the risk of spreading the EAB by shortening the time required for processing.

Trapping/Mapping – New Finds

Since the discovery of the EAB in 2008, Forestry Services has worked closely with key researchers to implement an EAB monitoring program to estimate the level of EAB activity in communities and to track its spread and hotspots. The monitoring program includes the use of insect trapping, field observations and aerial flights to track changes in Ash trees and movement in insect populations.

This year, 56 traps were installed across the City to collect monthly data on insect population and movement. The trap locations and preliminary results can be found on the enclosed map (see Appendix C). New finds of EAB beetles include [Barrhaven](#), Kanata North, Fitzroy Harbour, [Stittsville](#), [Richmond](#), [Manotick](#), Metcalfe, Vernon, Vars and Navan. This shows that the rate and distance that the insect is spreading is increasing each year, which will accelerate the decline of Ash cover in Ottawa.

Tree Inventory – Gathering Valuable Information

When Forestry Services completes the most recent phase of the tree inventory at the end of 2012, Council will have a clearer picture of what is ahead with respect to the number of Ash trees and action plans to implement the EAB strategy. The finalization of this phase of the tree inventory will also allow staff to better plan neighbourhood tree maintenance for the City's life cycle pruning program and will help answer questions related to maintenance responsibilities for trees adjacent to residences.

Tree Removal – Operations Resume

Ash tree removal operations will resume near the end of the week of September 24, 2012.

All affected Ward Councillors will be notified and provided with a list of removal locations prior to the commencement of the operation. Homeowners on affected streets will receive a notification letter the week prior to the operation explaining the work to be performed and Forestry Services' next steps. Work will generally take place between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., weather permitting.

Later this fall, I will report back with additional updates related to the topics discussed in this memo. In the meantime, should you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact Mr. David Barkley, Manager of Forestry Services at 613-580-2424, ext. 21148.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by,

Councillor Maria McRae

Chair, Environment Committee

River Ward City Councillor

Attachments (3)

cc:

Larry O'Keefe, General Manager, Public Works

David Barkley, Manager, Forestry Services
