



## Pickering trees could benefit from emerald ash borer intervention

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PICKERING -- City staff are eyeing ways to maintain Pickering's population of ash trees in the face of an emerald ash borer infestation.

At an executive committee meeting on Sept. 10, councillors discussed a proposal to institute a mitigation program that would see ash trees greater than 20 centimetres in diameter treated biannually to protect them from the invasive emerald ash borer beetle, which has been devastating ash tree populations across the province.

"This is a significant item, and the costs are tremendous either way," said Councillor Peter Rodrigues, noting that while treatment can cost about \$300 per tree, the cost to remove dead trees would be up to \$700 per tree.

Funding for the program, estimated at \$300,000 per year, will be considered as part of the 2013 budget. Staff noted that funding to manage the impacts of emerald ash borer could be ongoing for 15 years or more.

"We'd like to proceed on a path that's proactive instead of reactive and try to stop it in its tracks," said Everett Buntsma, director of community services for the City of Pickering, of the emerald ash mitigation.

"We chose the 20 centimetre diameter trees as a place to start because those were deemed to be mature trees worth saving; the younger ones can be more easily replaced with trees of the same size. Unfortunately there is no guarantees with this, it's like with any disease or infestation, there's no guarantee that you will be able to stop it."

Mr. Buntsma noted that staff would be able to revisit the mitigation program at any time if better, or cheaper, treatments are found in the future.

Coun. David Pickles praised the idea, noting ash trees line many of the city's residential streets.

"There is a great value in our boulevard trees, and without treatment all ash trees will perish over the next several years, some streets would be devastated," he said.

"I believe the City needs to try to save these mature trees. We also need to try to inform the public about how to spot ash trees in trouble and options for treating trees on private property."



**Pickering trees could benefit from emerald ash borer intervention.** AJAX -- GreenLawn's Phil Darnell treats Ajax-owned ash trees with TreeAzin to protect them from the threat of Emerald Ash Borer. July 11, 2012.. *Submitted Photo*

Councillors voted to approve the staff recommendation, which would see the program included for consideration in the 2013 budget. A final vote on the issue will be held at the upcoming council meeting on Sept. 17.

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