

Morden Treating Or Replacing 2,000 Ash Trees Ahead Of Possible Infestation

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City of Morden's Parks and Urban Forestry Manager - Shawn Dias

In preparation of an invasive insect infestation, the City of Morden is treating or potentially replacing nearly 37 percent of its trees.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive wood boring insect which originated in Asia and is now making its way to Manitoba and most recently was found in Winnipeg.

This has caused concern in the City of Morden Parks and Forestry Department because the City has a large quantity of Green Ash Trees throughout the City. Parks and Urban Forestry Manager and Certified Arborist Shawn Dias has been working on an Ash Tree Strategy.

"That Ash Strategy looks at a hybrid approach of removing Ash Trees that are in poor condition to start," said Dias. "Then we would look at some treatment of the Ash Trees as well and replacing them with non-Ash species."



File Photo of an adult Emerald Ash Bore insect. Because of the popularity of Ash trees in the past, on streets like Connor Hill and Rampton St., an infestation could mean the areas lose all their city-owned trees

The City has just under 2,000 ash trees on public property making up 37 percent of city-owned trees. This number is known because Parks and Urban Forestry and the City have completed its Urban Forest Management Plan, with each of the City-owned trees GPS marked, and their height, condition, and canopy condition all recorded for future information.

Ash was the primary species used after the discovery of Dutch Elm Disease. Once the EAB insect is found, it is estimated that within 10 years all ash trees in Morden will be gone.

Because of the popularity of Ash trees in the past, on streets like Connor Hill and Rampton St., an infestation could mean the areas lose all their city-owned trees.

One of the biggest indicators for detection is woodpecker activity on the surface according to Dias. He added this would give them a reason to do further inspection.

"We are going out and doing random branch sampling and peeling back the bark on some of the branches to see if we can expose the larval galleries to see if we have EAB," said Dias.

During the summer months, once the trees have leafed out they will be setting up traps to see if they can attract a full grown adult EAB to see if it's in fact in Morden.

The 'Slow The Spread' campaign is a Provincially driven initiative to help slow the spread of invasive species who travel in firewood. EAB is one of those insects that is transported to new locations via wood.

"If we can do things like providing firewood at our campground. Then that might be something we would explore and look at to discourage people from either leaving the community with wood or bringing it to the community from outside sources," said Dias.

Once EAB is found in a community the Canadian Food Inspection Agency would put the community in a quarantine zone where moving ash tree materials would be prohibited.