

Ash Tree Advice

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From Env. Com./Sustainable Montgomery & Shade Tree Committee

Many residents have inquired with the Township about what to do about their dying and dead ash trees, the result of damage inflicted by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive insect. Experts estimate that over 1



million ash trees will die in the Sourland Mountain region, and 24 million Statewide. There is hope for control of the EAB, but virtually all of this generation of mature ash trees will likely not survive. What can you do?

Treatment

Studies have shown that it is most cost-effective and only makes sense to treat ash trees with diameters between 12 and 30 inches and to begin treatment BEFORE a tree has 30% canopy thinning. It is recommended that small and unhealthy trees be proactively removed and replaced by other species of trees. The safest and most effective chemical seems to be emamectin benzoate, which is injected in the trunk of the trees every two years in mid to late spring. The choice of treatment depends on a number of factors which you should discuss with your arborist. In deciding whether or not to treat, keep in mind the cost of removing the tree. The cost of treatment is a few hundred dollars per tree per treatment, depending on the size of the tree.

Consult with a licensed tree care professional for specific advice. Refer to this [2-page primer from Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station](#).

Removal

If your tree care professional advises that treatment is not cost-effective or the tree is already too damaged, removal is best completed when the tree is still alive. Once the tree is dead, the branches become brittle, break off more easily in high winds, ice and snow, causing damage to property or other nearby trees. Choose a certified, insured tree care professional and solicit more than one quote for the work. Consider banding together with your neighbors who also need tree work to get a better price. Unfortunately, there are no grants or financial assistance available through the Township or State to assist with removal.

Replanting

A Greek proverb astutely observes that “a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.” Start now to plant the next generation of trees! The Township’s Environmental Commission and Shade Tree Committee strongly encourage residents to plant new trees to replace any trees that have been removed. The benefits of trees are innumerable as habitat, a source of shade to lower your air conditioning & heating bills, adding value to your property, and scrubbing the air we breathe. As our trees face ever-evolving pressure from deer, disease and invasive insects, we encourage you to plant a variety of species, not a monoculture. This could help protect from a massive die off, like we are currently experiencing with ash trees.

Consider these suggestions for fast-growing, native trees to add to your yard. More suggestions of [native trees](#) are offered on the Shade Tree Committee’s page of the Township website.

- Tulip poplar: prefers moist soils; spring flowers (greenish-yellow with orange streaks)
- American sycamore: very fast growing; prefers wet soils; high wildlife value; large leaves and round seed pod
- Hackberry: tolerates dry soil
- Sugar maple: beautiful fall color
- American linden (basswood): sweet-smelling spring flowers
- River birch: tolerates wet or drier soils; visually interesting bark
- Eastern cottonwood: very fast growing; prefers wet soils; can be prone to breakage, so best to plant away from your house
- Eastern red cedar: native evergreen; very drought tolerant

Source: Montgomery Twp. Env. Com./Sustainable Montgomery & Montgomery Twp. Shade Tree Committee

[Shade Tree Committee](#)