



City of East Providence
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PRESS RELEASE

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City of East Providence to treat ash trees, trunk injection to begin in July

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – The City of East Providence is launching an Emerald Ash Borer treatment program in July to save some of its most valuable ash trees. Funded in part by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Division of Forest Environment’s Forest Health Program, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s United States Forest Service Eastern Region, the goal of this program is to treat specific city-owned ash trees with an insecticide to protect them from the invasive emerald ash borer beetle, which feeds on and ultimately kills all infected ash tree species.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was found in Rhode Island in July 2018. An invasive pest native to Asia, EAB was first detected in the United States near Detroit in 2002. Since then, EAB has spread to 36 states and the District of Columbia and has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees in North America. Once EAB population levels are high in an area, ash trees can die within one to two years. Dead ash trees shed limbs, posing a threat to public safety. Cities and towns, as well as private landowners, are now faced with the decision of how to manage their ash trees knowing that they will eventually succumb to this pest. The options are to either apply insecticide treatment or remove and replace ash trees. Most often, cities and towns will use an approach that employs both strategies: remove and replace smaller ash trees and trees that are already in poor condition while treating larger ash trees in good health to prolong their life and all of the ecosystem benefits that they provide.

The \$5,000 RIDEM grant, matched with \$5,000 in city funds, will treat approximately 70-80 city-owned ash trees in East Providence with emamectin benzoate, an insecticide that is injected into the tree trunk. This treatment is proven to be effective at prolonging the life of ash trees in areas with EAB infestations, while limiting the impact of the insecticide on the environment and

beneficial organisms. The City has contracted Davey Resource Group to inspect and treat ash trees located within the city right-of-way that have been identified as high priority (large diameter and/or in good condition). Their licensed, trained arborists will inspect the trees and treat those that are not already showing signs of significant decline due to EAB infestation. Davey anticipates to start this work in mid-July. Any trees that are treated will be marked with spray paint. City-owned ash trees were identified through a citywide street tree inventory conducted in summer 2021. The inventory provides valuable data on the species, size, condition and location of city street trees to help with urban forest management decisions.

Homeowners should be aware that the city will only be treating city-owned trees located within the city right-of-way. However, EAB is a pervasive pest that will impact all ash trees, including trees on privately owned property. Private property owners will need to decide if and how to manage any ash trees on their property for EAB. Consult a certified arborist with a professional pesticide applicator's license to compare the costs and benefits of treatment versus removal and replacement. Additional information and resources about EAB are available through RIDEM, USDA, and the EAB Information Network. <https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/agriculture-and-forest-environment/forest-environment/forest-health-1>
<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/emerald-ash-borer> <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>