CITY OF WHITEWATER, WISCONSIN

Private Citizen Property

EMERALD ASH BORER ACTION PLAN FOR PRESERVING SELECTED ASH TREES

SUMMARY INTRODUCTION: This plan provides specific information to help private land owners preserve ash trees they choose to save by treating them with a systemic insecticide.

The unfortunate truth is that ash trees which are in an area where EAB has been detected and are not treated with a systemic insecticide will die from Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) larvae. All ash trees which are not selected to be saved should be cut down in order to reduce the intensity of the beetle invasion upon those trees we are trying to preserve.

SELECT AND IDENTIFY ASH TREES TO BE PRESERVED: Private land owners should select trees they will be treating.

Private land owners are encouraged to mark their trees with green and black ribbons as well. The City will make ribbons available at no charge as part of the program to deal with EAB.

As soon as EAB has been detected within fifteen miles of Whitewater, private land owners should be encouraged to begin cutting down all ash trees which will not be preserved. Disposal of and use of the wood, prior to infection, will not be subject to the DNR restrictions which become effective once trees are infected.

Trees which are larger than 25 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) are difficult to protect because of their extensive mass of branches and leaves. Additional injections are often required, without consistent results. An experienced arborist should evaluate privately owned larger trees to determine the best approach.

Trees selected to be preserved should be healthy. Trees which have damaged bark due to storm damage, lawn equipment or construction machinery are probably not worth saving because their life span is already limited. Compacted soils and crushed roots from construction or regular vehicle traffic do not provide favorable conditions for a long lived tree.

Ash trees which are already lightly infested with EAB have less chance of being saved than fully healthy trees. There is no possibility of saving an infected ash tree whose canopy is around 50% in decline.

TREATMENTS FOR EAB:

1. Biological controls are still in the process of being studied. The latest printed information regarding the release of three Chinese parasitoid species (small stingless relatives of ants and wasps) in Michigan, in 2007 has yet to confirm the ability to help control EAB.

2. Injection of systemic insecticide directly into the trunk of the tree. Use of special equipment and the need for training is required. The city staff will receive training for this method with larger trees. Three insecticides can be used.

   A. "Imidacloprid" is used world-wide and has low toxicity to mammals. It is used to control fleas and ticks on pets. Very degradable in sunlight, it is good for one year treatment.

   B. "Emamectin benzoate" is very effective, but it is very toxic and kills a broader range of insects including beneficial ones. It is effective for two to three years.

   C. "Bidrin" is very toxic, a category 1, which indicates it has corrosive effects to skin and eyes of humans.

3. Injection of systemic insecticide 2-4 inches directly into the soil within 18 inches around the trunk where the large root sections can absorb the insecticide. This method reduces the chance of runoff due to rain and puts the insecticide below any organic mulch which absorbs and holds the chemical. Special equipment and training are needed for this method. The insecticides available are the same as for Method #2.

4. Spray systemic insecticide on the lower 5-6 feet of tree trunk. This can be done easily with a home, hand held, garden sprayer. No special training is needed. The insecticide specified for this method is "Dinotefuran". Use of this insecticide is most effective on younger trees with thin bark. The advantage of this method is that the tree/bark is not injured by the drilling of holes as with the injection method. The city will use this method where applicable.

5. Drenching the soil within 18 inches around the trunk with systemic insecticide. This method does not require special equipment or training. "Imidacloprid" is the safest insecticide to use for this method. Any runoff due to rain is mitigated by the lower toxicity of this insecticide for beneficial insects, birds and mammals. The soil should be moist, not too dry or too wet.

   This method, as the others, should be implemented in early June, when black locust trees (Robinia pseudoacacia) are in bloom.

6. Cover spraying the whole tree is not recommended due to the wide area affected by wind drifting.

IN CONCLUSION

The City Forester will provide a list of all local arborists and tree cutters along with information of services they provide and the cost for their services so the public can easily decide how best

to get the help they need. Our local retailers will be encouraged to supply the recommended systemic insecticides.

The public will need to be educated on the subject of EAB, how to identify ash trees, and which ones are worth treating. Information can be obtained from the City Website.

Landlords and home owners must post signs on trees being treated, if the general public and neighbors could come in contact with the insecticide. See “State Environmental Resource Center” on the internet for details regarding posting.

The yellow pages and the internet can be used by private property owners to find tree care professionals who are licensed to treat for EAB.