



Emerald ash borer beetles invade Beeton

Canada | January 28, 2021

If you hear chainsaws and someone yelling ‘TIMBER!’ in Beeton over the next few months, a rogue logging crew hasn’t moved in from Northern Ontario to ravage the local hardwood forests. A wooded area in the west end of Beeton has been infected by emerald ash borer beetles. The wooded area near McCullough Avenue and Danielle Avenue South was devastated by the beetles with around 90 percent of the Ash trees either dead or dying. The Town will be removing all of the trees. While some small remnants will remain to compost, most of the tree branches and trunks will be removed. The emerald ash borer beetle is an invasive species of beetle native to Asia. It is believed to have been accidentally introduced to North America in wooden packaging materials sometime in the late 1980’s. First discovered in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario in 2002, the beetle has spread rapidly across much of the northeastern United States, southern Ontario and parts of Quebec.

The beetle has already killed millions of ash trees in these areas. Unfortunately, once the beetle is discovered to have attacked a tree, it’s too late to save the tree from slowly dying. The beetle only attacks ash trees. Signs of infestation include small D-shaped holes in the bark and larva feeding galleries. Ash trees account for approximately ten per cent of street trees in Alliston, Beeton, and Tottenham. It is predicted the emerald ash beetle is going to have a devastating effect on the ash tree population in the area. Some trees can be protected by the use of stem injected insecticides.

This doesn’t mean all ash trees will disappear but it may be some time before stock is restored. There are efforts to preserve ash tree seeds for future planting. There is also research underway to determine how to control the beetle population with natural methods. Since the emerald ash beetle is easily moved from different locations, you should not be moving firewood to any new location. Buy and burn all firewood locally to avoid moving the beetle to a new area and starting a new infestation.

If you happen to locate a beetle infested tree on public property you can notify the Town of New Tecumseh Public Works Department. A crew from Weller Tree Service was on site in Beeton working hard to remove the dying trees. Crew chief, Josh Hirsch, said they have crews around the province removing infested trees from different locations.

“We have crews all over the place taking down these infected trees,” he said. “We try to work around the other hard wood trees in the lot to avoid damaging them. Eventually those trees will grow bigger and fill in the area.” Once felled, the trees are hauled up a hill using a winch where they are cut into smaller pieces by chainsaw. Smaller branches are fed into a wood chipper and the chips will be recycled to be used in landscaping projects around the town. The cut logs aren’t usable for much besides firewood due to the beetle infestation.

One local resident who heats his home by firewood arrived and loaded up his truck with the logs. He plans to take them home and use his log splitter and chainsaw to make them the proper size for burning in his fireplace. If you have an infestation on private property and need to remove the tree, you are encouraged to plant another hardwood tree to replace it. The Town will be working to remove the infected trees in Beeton between January and April.