

Dead ash trees may cause power outages

Overview

Dead and dying ash trees are a widespread problem in Southeastern Michigan, due to the emerald ash borer, a foreign insect pest that has invaded ash trees in several states. The dead and dying trees pose a serious danger to people, property and power lines because they are structurally unstable and may fall at any time.

Ash trees are increasingly responsible for power outages when tall ash trees on private property fall on Detroit Edison electric lines. These trees often grow as tall as 60 feet and can damage utility lines located a substantial distance from the trees. Falling trees can affect phone and cable television lines as well.

There is an expense connected with removing these trees from private property; however, property owners' potential expense associated with doing nothing could be far worse. These potential costs include death, injuries, damage to your home, damage to neighbors' homes and damage to vehicles. Property owners are responsible for damage that occurs as a result of falling trees, and property insurance may not cover damage caused by dead or dying trees.

Property owners are encouraged to remove dead and dying trees of any species.

Special considerations for ash trees

- Due to the emerald ash borer quarantine, ash wood may only be disposed of at authorized disposal sites (*see the Where to Get More Information section, below*).
- Ash-tree firewood and wood debris cannot be transported out of the emerald ash borer quarantine area established by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (*see the Where to Get More Information section, below*).
- Property owners may want to explore alternatives for the use of dead and dying ash trees, as well as other trees. For more ideas on using ash and other wood, read the publication, "My Ash Tree is Dead, Now What Do I Do?" The publication is available on the State of Michigan and Michigan State University Web sites (*see the Where to Get More Information section, below*).

Where to get more information

For information on ash-wood quarantine areas, approved disposal sites, use of ash wood and more, visit these sites and search on *emerald ash borer*.

- State of Michigan, michigan.gov
- Michigan State University, <http://emeraldashborer.info/>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, usda.gov
- Arbor Day Foundation, arborday.org