

City Tree Board Responds to EAB Threat March 30, 2019

The City of Carrington Tree Board committee has been meeting to begin to address the expected arrival of emerald ash borer (EAB), the tree-killing insect first found in Michigan in 2002. Sixty-one percent of approximately 1,000 public trees in Carrington are ash. Private trees are not included in this figure.

EAB has already killed tens of millions of ash trees in at least 35 states. It is very hard to detect the insect at first, but after five to eight years of quietly infesting area trees, the insect numbers explode and large numbers of trees begin to die quickly. All types of ash trees are susceptible: green, white, black and 'Mancana' Manchurian ash. Two cities near North Dakota have confirmed tree infestations: Winnipeg, MB (December 2017) and Sioux Falls, SD (May 2018).

It is always a good idea to have diversity in our city forest. We already know how devastating the death of our elm trees has been to the beauty of our city. The time to start adding new types of trees to our yards and streets is now. Trees keep us healthier by absorbing pollutants and CO₂, encouraging us to walk and by relieving mental stress. They also decrease cooling and heating costs, reduce city sewer loads by absorbing rain and they extend the life of our streets when they shade the pavement. Best yet, the US Forest Service estimates that healthy trees add 10% to property values.

According a study by the Nebraska Forest Service, the most expensive response to the threat of EAB is to 'do nothing'. Dead ash trees become dry and brittle quickly, developing into threats to people and homes. By waiting to react until after trees have died, costs for homeowners and the city increase due to the strong, short-term demand for tree removal.

The Tree Board has five goals:

- Begin EAB awareness education.
- Make the public aware of the Carrington city tree ordinance.
- Update the 2015 Community Forest Service city tree inventory.
- Identify and remove poor quality right-of-way trees.
- Make plans to replant a variety of trees throughout the city.

Future articles will be published to make you aware of the current City tree ordinance and the property owner's responsibility for public trees. We will also update you on efforts to begin removal of poor quality public trees and plans to replant these trees with your help. A healthy city forest is a benefit for everyone who lives in Carrington.

Tree Board members: Jennifer Gast, City auditor; Jason Wolsky public works director; Greg Edland, council member; Dionn Schaaf; Doug Schroeder and Kathy Wiederholt.