

City of Carmel

www.carmel.in.gov

One Civic Square Carmel, IN 46032

News Release

Date: June 29, 2010
Contact: Nancy Heck (317) 571-2494
Release: Immediate

The March of the Emerald Ash Borer Takes Carmel Trees by Storm

By: Ashley Mulis

I know what you are thinking: What is the deal with all of the dead trees this spring? Now that the trees have produced leaves, it has become pretty obvious that the dreaded emerald ash borer we have been hearing about for five years has started to take a major toll in Carmel. For those of you who have not heard the emerald ash borer (EAB) story, here's a short recap: This bug is actually an exotic beetle that showed up near Detroit in 2002. It is believed that the pest arrived in packing material from ships or airplanes with freight originating in Asia. The adult beetles eat leaves; but it is the larvae that cause the big problem by tunneling under the tree bark and essentially cutting of the ash tree's ability to transport water and nutrients.

EAB was found in Indiana in 2004 and has slowly made its way into Canada and 14 other states. The insect is responsible for the death of millions of ash trees, costing homeowners, municipalities and states a great deal of money and heartache. Ash trees are not only native to a large part of our country, but are one of the faster growing hardwood trees, making them a favorite among landscape architects and city foresters. Ash trees have played a big part in a great American pastime. You have likely swung a bat made from the wood of an ash tree.

So now what do we do? Unless you are willing to chemically treat your ash tree for the foreseeable future, the undeniable truth is that this insect is here to stay and we are in for huge environmental losses. We are left with the task of replacing that huge loss of tree canopy. As they say, there is no time like the present. Start planting new trees in the landscape. There are many wonderful native species you can replace ash trees with, such as oaks, bald cypress, tulip poplar and sweetgum. Non-native species are sterile in the environment and some have even become invasive, displacing our native plants and trees and the birds and animals that depend on them. Native trees support native species. It makes perfect sense doesn't it? So while we are mourning the loss of our ash trees, we need to get to work on planting a new source of shade and beauty for our fair city. Visit the Carmel Urban Forestry website at www.carmelurbanforestry.com and locate a more complete list of recommended tree species, more info on EAB, and how to properly plant, water, mulch so that we can continue to grow and diversify our urban forest in Carmel.

Ashley Mulis is a member of the Carmel Urban Forestry Committee and the Executive Director of the Indiana Urban Forest Council.