

Franklin Township Hunterdon County

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ALERT!

Public Health & Safety Notice to Residents

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an insect initially brought into the United States on contaminated wooden pallets. It has already infected and killed more than 75 million trees in Michigan and Ohio. It has been of major concern in New Jersey for many years and has now taken a strong hold in Franklin Township. 99% of all ash trees that become infected with EAB will die. A treatment using a systemic insecticide is possible, but only with very early detection and in most cases is impractical.

As ash trees die from EAB they lose 50% of their moisture after only one or two years. Many times trees may look healthy and have only 20% canopy dieback – but they are hazards. As the wood dries out it becomes very brittle. There is a dangerous problem that occurs when ash trees are killed by EAB – a consequence called “Ash Snap”. Entire trees will shatter, fail low on the trunk, or uproot. Seemingly healthy trees fail with no warning and without wind, snow, or rain loads.

This is a concern for anyone who spends time around ash trees:

- Residents with ash trees near their homes or anywhere frequented by them on their properties
- Farmers plowing or working in fields with ash hedgerows (Livestock is also endangered)
- Motorists
- Hunters

Infected trees also have the potential to bring down powerlines, block roads, driveways, and damage homes and property. If you have a woodlot and are removing infected ash trees you should not cut wood or attempt removal alone.

Infected trees are so dangerous that once they reach 20% canopy dieback, arborists and tree cutters will not allow their workers to climb these trees during the removal process. Without climbers tree removal becomes expensive since cranes and lifts need to be brought in.

So....if you have ash trees on your property, what are your options?

- **Have infected trees removed while they are still green and can be safely climbed.** This proactive option is the cheapest - Once the tree gets to the 20% dieback point costs for removal will double.
- **Treat the tree.** This is another proactive choice that is initially cheaper, but may be more expensive in the long run since treatments need to be done approximately every three years. Application must be by a certified arborist or pesticide applicator. Costs are about \$10 per trunk diameter inch.
- **Do Nothing.** This reactive option will be the most expensive. Either you will pay double to get the tree removed once it becomes a hazard, or it will come down on its own. Dependent on location of the tree this could lead to property damage, injury, or lawsuit.

Residents and property owners are reminded that trees on private property are the responsibility of the property owner regardless of whether they are located within a municipal right of way. For additional information, a copy of Franklin Township Ordinance 2018-14 is available on the Township website, www.franklin-twp.org, and in the Municipal Clerk's Office.

The Emerald Ash Borer is not a myth. It is an insect that will kill 99% of all ash trees in the State of NJ including those in Franklin Township. It has been conservatively estimated that more than 50% of the trees along our roads and in the urban forests of Franklin Township are ash. This is of major concern and will seriously impact our rural landscape for years to come.

Residents are urged to be proactive!

For more information you may go online and google The Emerald Ash Borer in NJ or contact one of the many area licensed arborist or tree removal services. You may also contact Franklin Township for more information.