
Tree News

Fall 2012

A Newsletter from Connecticut Arborists, Inc.

Emerald Ash Borer in Connecticut

We started raising the alarm a few years ago about some invasive insects that were on the way to Connecticut. We had expected that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) would be found here in 2011, but it wasn't found until this past summer. It's now been confirmed to be in Prospect, Naugatuck and Bethany. Our understanding is that this infestation is fairly advanced in its development and likely has been here for a couple of years. That's a typical occurrence; it takes awhile for scientists to find any invasive insect that moves in to a new area.

Well, what do we do now? If you have ash trees that are important to you please make sure that we are aware of that. Important trees can be treated with a material that will prevent the EAB from killing it. Either a soil injection or bark treatment will be a good approach to manage this insect.

There is another responsibility to be aware of regarding an infestation of any boring insect. When these pests are active they are found in the wood of their host trees. So, whenever the host trees are cut down it is very important not to move the firewood from those trees. Something seemingly benign as bringing some wood to a ski house in Vermont may very well bring the infestation to another state. So, **please don't move firewood!**

Seasonal Tips

I recall that at this time last year we had just gone through the damage from tropical storm Irene, with the heavy snow of the Halloween storm still to come. We still are dealing with work from those storms one year later.

A question for you—are your trees in good condition? It does make good sense to have an arborist check your trees on a regular basis. We can identify structurally weak conditions and often take corrective action. Structural pruning and cabling can be a good thing!

At times we might actually recommend tree removal. Over the decades I realize that I've become more focused on true safety; sometimes a tree needs to be removed. The safety of each of us is ultimately the most important consideration.

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Specie Spotlight

In my mind the fall season is a great time for planting trees. We don't do this work as part of our business so I often plant something at home. Last fall I planted two newer varieties of American elm. One is the Princeton variety and the other is Jefferson. So far they are doing fine and time will tell if they thrive as I'm hoping for. In a few decades they might develop into a mature tree such as the picture to the left.

This fall I'm trying for a Franklin tree, *Franklinia alatamaha*. This is an ornamental sized tree noted for its September show of white flowers. The blooms resemble those of stewartia, to which it is related. This tree has gone extinct in the wild and survives only because of collectors. The individual who was most responsible for this early work, William Bartram, named the plant in honor of a family friend, Ben Franklin.



Did you Know?

As you may imagine I'm often talking trees with people. It's not unusual to have the topic of invasive insects and diseases come up because of news stories such as the recent ones about Emerald Ash Borer. A common reaction is that someone will bemoan the introduction of the new invader, wondering about the current state of the world that lets this happen. Well, the truth is that this type of occurrence has been a regular event in our history. I remember that the hemlock wooly adelgid came to Connecticut in 1985, with the winds of Hurricane Gloria. The pest was originally introduced to the U.S. in the 60's, coming from Asia. Dutch Elm Disease has wiped out most native elms and this disease was introduced to the U.S. in the 1920's, coming from logs shipped here from Europe. We had a wicked infestation of gypsy moths in the early 70's and early 80's; it was like a plague! Yup, an introduced pest from Europe in 1869 when they escaped laboratories in Massachusetts. The labs were trying to develop a silk-worm industry in the states but things went wrong. Probably the most serious introduced problem is chestnut blight. American chestnut was once the most important timber tree in the eastern U.S. Its wood was used for nearly everything, from furniture to barn beams to shingles. That is no longer the case since the tree is almost completely wiped out as a result of this introduced disease, starting around 1900.