



Emerald Ash Borer Status Update (2/1/16) – The threat is closer!

This is an update on the issue that we have all been hoping would just never really happen and that the problems and costs of dealing with it would just disappear. Unfortunately this notice is to advise you that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) threat which was last reported to be in Warrington & Langhorne (about 15 miles away) has **recently been identified** as the source of some dead trees **on Stoney Hill Road, New Hope (about 4 miles away)**.

So, just as the head of the Forestry Department at the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) said in his email about a year ago and just as we were told at an informational meeting in Philadelphia almost 2 years ago, the EAB invasion and its resulting **Ash tree devastation will inevitably continue to move** from its Midwestern beginning through wooded areas of the Mid-Atlantic and New England region.

Some good news is that we have been aware of the issue and been developing plans to deal with it. Of course the only way to deal with it is to spend money on it; doing nothing is not a viable option. In order to spend the money wisely we evaluated alternatives over the prior year and developed the **plan that was presented at the June 10, 2014 Annual Meeting and which has been posted on our website ever since** (see "[Emerald Ash Borer](#)" page). Please review the material and references to refresh or inform your understanding.

As you may recall the first monies (\$150 per unit) required to fund the effort were included in your 2015 Assessment, the second installment (\$150) is included in the 2016 Assessment due on March 1, 2016. As promised these funds are separately accounted for and included in an "Ash Remediation" Account which is dedicated to serve only the costs of this issue. **After the 2016 Assessment there will be \$69,000 set aside for this purpose**; the full magnitude of the 10 year funding effort was planned to be in the range of **\$300,000**. The recent advance of the EAB from Warrington to New Hope may change that pace and/or amount of required funding even though it takes several years after initial infestation for a tree to die, and they won't all get infected at once.

As a reminder of the reason that doing nothing is not a viable option for the Ash trees on your private property or for those on the Common Area property is that once it is infected, the tree proceeds through a dying process that renders its trunk and branches much more brittle than a typical dead tree. We have many Ash trees in Riverwoods that are more than 50 years old and between 50 to 100+ feet tall – AND have **the potential for falling branches or trunks to strike nearby homes, sidewalks or roads especially when the winds become serious. These are the potentially "Hazardous" trees.**



Trees on Private Property (Yours) – What you need to decide/do?

As another reminder from the material available on the website, if you decide that one or several of the Ash trees on your property are “High Value” (important to you) and **if you want to try to save them you should begin treating them as soon as possible, especially now.** Several residents have already been doing so. Some of the various treatment methods encourage treatment to be done **before the spring** when the EAB larvae are more active and likely to invade your trees. This is one of the primary purposes of this notice. If you have trees that you want to try to save, your action should be taken soon. You will need a qualified Arborist to advise you - we are not qualified to offer specific advice. Note that without leaves, the tree bark can be used to identify an Ash tree. Also note that any treatment regimen will likely be required annually until the threat has disappeared from the area.

If you elect not to treat your Ash trees and they are within “striking distance” of your home you will need to evaluate that risk and the alternative of removing them yourself (by a qualified Tree services company). Depending on their size & accessibility, the cost of felling them and then hauling away the dead material can be significant. Phasing their removal over time will mitigate the financial impact in any one period, just as the association is doing. As you can see, **doing nothing is not a viable option.**

Trees on Common Area Property (Everyone’s) – What the Board is doing:

As part of the evaluation process and resulting plan, we have previously surveyed the potentially “Hazardous” Ash trees on common property (details included on website – about 300 trees) and have also recently (1/21/16) revisited many of them. The other primary purpose of this email is to let you know that **we will soon begin the first phase of our removal efforts on common property** with the removal of about 30 “Hazardous” trees. They are not yet infected but many are not in good health and more vulnerable to EAB; they are also generally the largest and most potentially hazardous (i.e., most liable to fall on private property or sidewalks & roads on common property).

The areas behind Pinewood & Riverview circles and parts of Riverwoods Drive (South/East side) will be **the initial areas of focus.**

You may therefore see tree service workers in the areas near your property and we may need access through your rear yards to get to the common wooded areas beyond. We will make every reasonable effort to insure that the trees felled in the wooded areas will lie as flat as possible to the ground to minimize their visual impact but most of these trees are so large that removing them from the woods is not a viable option, physically or financially. There are of course some already naturally dead trees lying in the woods. The newly felled trees will not lay atop any existing ones whenever possible.



Remember that the name of our community, “Riverwoods”, was chosen by the developers for a reason; and the beauty of the wooded areas may be part of the reason many of us originally chose to live here and/or just enjoy living here now. **Your Association Board totally gets that and fully appreciates the aesthetics and natural beauty of our community;** we will do everything feasible to preserve it, even while our stewardship responsibility unfortunately requires destroying some elements of it in the process. Some other bit of good news is a reminder that Ash trees are not the only tree species that we have in our wooded areas. The controlled removal of the hazardous Ash trees also helps prevent collateral damage to those other species from falling Ash trees and branches.

Trees on “Others” property – There are Riverwoods’ owners’ properties that are adjacent to property not owned by the Association – What are you doing?

For those of you who may be concerned about potentially “Hazardous” trees on adjacent property that does not belong to the Riverwoods Association **you are advised to contact the owner** of that property to evaluate what actions/options will or can be taken by them or you. Those properties are along the south/east sides of upper Riverwoods Drive & the south side of West Bridgewater and are owned by others (Conservancies & individuals). There **may also be some trees on your neighbors’ private property that represent more of a potential hazard to you than to them;** you will have to work out with them how to deal with the potential damage.

Reminder: If you want to stay informed and are not currently on our email list, please just [click here](#) and provide your Name, Street Address & email address and we will add you. We follow strict privacy guidelines and do not give your email addresses to others. Alternatively, you can fill out the “Contact Form” on our website.

Website Address: <http://www.riverwoodsatnewhope.org>

As mentioned earlier, there are extensive literature links and reference material about the “[Emerald Ash Borer](#)” on the website.