

# More Roadside Trees Slated for Removal in Next 5 Years

BY MEMBERS OF CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND SAM SCHNESKI, COUNTY FORESTER

The Emerald Ash Borer hasn't been identified in Guilford yet, but it comes closer every year, bringing the potential to destroy up to 98% of our ash trees, as it has done in other parts of the country. To prepare for its arrival, the Conservation Commission just finished our Ash Tree Inventory, a two-year project to map every ash tree along our roadside right-of-ways (ROWs) and on town property. Large maps reflecting our work were printed for the road crew's use and for the Town Office. We found many ash trees already in decline or dead from other causes. Ash trees become brittle and dangerous to remove as they weaken, threatening to fall onto roads and buildings. Sadly, it is safer (and less costly) to cut ash trees while they are still alive.

Based on the Conservation Commission's Inventory, the Guilford road crew is beginning the multi-year process of removing hazardous ash trees from town ROWs to increase the safety of our roads. Other hazardous trees may be removed at the same time. This process will not include trees under the utility ROWs or along Coolidge Highway/Route 5 because those trees are the responsibility of Green Mountain Power or the state highway department.

While the town has the right to remove trees within its ROWs (usually 16' or 25' from the center of the road), you as the landowner have the right to retain the wood from the cut trees or ask the town-contracted tree service to remove the wood. Both GMC and D&E Tree Service will chip the branches and haul the chips away. The butts and



*GCC member Karen Murphy measuring the diameter of a huge and healthy ash tree on Carpenter Road*

large branches are left on the ground and belong to the landowner. If you choose to retain the wood, you may let it lie on the ground to decompose, cut it into firewood, sell to a local sawmill, or give or sell it to anyone interested.

Guilford and Brattleboro have sawmills, including a couple of mobile mills that can come to you. Wood delivery services can be hired to cut and split firewood. You can also donate your wood to families in need of fuel assistance by contacting Guilford Cares, who may be able to provide volunteers

to move the wood.

The town plans to contact you before work begins on your road to ask if you want to keep the wood or have it removed. You may also want to talk to Dan Zumbruski, Road Commissioner and Tree Warden, about trees of special value on your property that you don't want cut, or problem trees beyond the right-of-way. He may be able to help you negotiate a lower price to cut problem trees near the right-of-way while the crew is on your road.

You definitely should plan for the use/disposal of any large trees along your roadside. However, ash trees in your forest should be considered in a different way than roadside trees that pose a threat to infrastructure or public safety. Foresters are encouraging landowners NOT to indiscriminately cut their ash trees unless they threaten roads or buildings. Tree biologists hope to identify strains of trees that are resistant to Emerald Ash Borer in order to breed healthy ash trees for the future. If you

have a fine ash tree that provides shade or beauty in your yard, you also might want to consider asking a certified arborist to vaccinate it with a special pesticide that protects it from the EAB.

The Forest Stewards Guild has developed ten recommendations for landowners for managing ash trees in the face of Emerald Ash Borer and climate change. For more information, go to: <https://foreststewardsguild.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Ten-Recommendations-for-Managing-Ash.pdf>



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