



For Immediate Release
January 4, 2018

Contact: Mary-Hope Vass, Public Information Officer
540.432.8931
MaryHope.Vass@HarrisonburgVA.gov

City Works to Combat the Emerald Ash Borer and Improve the City's Tree Canopy

Harrisonburg, Va. – The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department is in the process of evaluating its tree canopy to combat an invasive insect, the emerald ash borer.

The emerald ash borer is a non-native beetle that has infested ash trees throughout Virginia. Specifically, this insect has been identified on city-owned trees in Harrisonburg. The insect's larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees, which disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Once the larvae are adults, they will fly to another ash tree to lay their eggs, thus repeating the cycle.

Since May 2017, city staff have identified numerous trees suffering from the emerald ash borer and a dozen have been removed. In Purcell Park, approximately 20 percent of the trees are ash trees. While there are some treatments for this insect, many times by the time it is identified, the tree is heavily infested, not treatable, and will need to be removed.

In an effort to diversify the city's urban forests and as infested ash trees are cut down, the city is planting a variety of new species of trees. Approximately 87 new trees have been planted since the fall of 2016.

"We are working to increase the variety of species throughout our wooded areas in the city to have a healthier tree population," explained Jeremy Harold, arborist and Park Superintendent. "Should another non-native insect come through, it is our goal that by having a more diverse tree population, there will be less of an impact."

City residents are encouraged to contact a certified tree arborist to evaluate trees on private property.

On **Tuesday, January 9**, crews will remove four ash trees (*pictured below*), which are infected with the emerald ash borer, along the south side of Court Square. The southern lane of travel on Court Square and the sidewalk will be closed while this work is being done.

Although its specific use has not yet been identified, the lumber from these trees will be reused. The Parks and Recreation Department will also plant new trees in this area of Court Square in the spring.

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Pictured above: Four trees on the south side of Court Square and Main Street that are infested with the emerald ash borer and will be removed on January 9.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/tree-canopy-grant>

Residents with questions can contact Jeremy Harold, with the Parks and Recreation Department at 540-433-9168. Resources are also available [online](#) through the Virginia Department of Forestry.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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