

The Emerald Ash Borer, an insect native to northeastern Asia, was first reported in North America in Detroit around 2002. It probably arrived in wooden packing material from China. Since then it has killed billions of ash trees in Midwestern USA and Canada; now it has reached Lancaster County. The borer can kill a small tree as quickly as 1-2 years after infestation. Large trees may take 3 to 4 years to die. Infected trees appear to most persons to be relatively healthy for a while, which contributes to this being such a “contagious” disease. There are several methods of chemical treatment to prolong somewhat the life of the tree, but none has proven to be a permanent “cure”, which is why many entomologists and foresters recommend that the least expensive option for those landowners with a few ash trees is no chemical treatment followed by removal of the dead tree, proper disposal of the wood, and then replacement with a tree that is not an ash. The abundance of ash in the forests of Lancaster County makes preemptive cutting and removal of the wood the best financially viable option for owners of large tracts of forest.

In accord with Lancaster Township ordinances (see the Lancaster Township website, under “ordinances” search “street trees”) the policy of SV HOA for ash trees along the streets in the common areas will be that they will not be chemically treated, but replaced after death with an appropriate non-ash species. We believe that this is the most prudent use of your funds. A number of residents have ashes as street trees on their lots that were planted by the builders of the units. Note that the HOA does not require that homeowners chemically treat or remove and replace dead street trees, but Lancaster Township does require (Ordinance 236-607) that on streets dedicated to the Township individual homeowners replace street trees within a specific time period after the death of the tree (Note: on streets not yet dedicated Lancaster Township requires that the developer replace trees that die). See Appendix 11 of the above-mentioned ordinance for details including the requirement that homeowners must receive permission from the township supervisors before removing any street tree and before picking a replacement, etc. The Ordinance contains additional information about plantings and replacement of street trees pertinent to individual home owners, including Table 6-5 which “lists recommended species for street trees, but selection is not limited to the following:” We interpret this wording to mean that the township supervisors may approve other species if they are requested by homeowners. For areas where “root space” is limited (due to sidewalks, home foundations, etc.) additional species not on Table 6-5 worth considering include: Redbud; Kousa dogwood; thornless Hawthorns such as “Washington”, “Crusader”, “Princeton Sentry” and others; disease resistant Crabapples such as “Adams”, “Prairifire” and several others; and Serviceberry. Also note that one species on Table 6-5, Sawtooth Oak (*Quercus acutissima*) is considered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service as an undesirable invasive species (from Asia) in the Mid-Atlantic States. So we urge homeowners not to plant Sawtooth Oak! Please note that Lancaster Township must approve of the removal of any street tree by a homeowner. And the Township must approve of the type (species) of the replacement tree.