

TREE DISEASE

IN STEARNS
ELECTRIC
SERVICE
TERRITORY



| STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION



Stearns Electric Association often encounters diseased trees throughout our service territory. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), Oak Wilt and Dutch Elm diseases are spread by insects, but worsened due to drought conditions and other tree stressors.

Many affected trees are outside of the Cooperative's normal tree clearing distance, but because they are dying, they become a threat to our power line and must be managed.

STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION TREE CLEARING POLICIES

Stearns Electric executes a four-year vegetation management tree-clearing cycle to remove danger trees and brush out of the right-of-way (ROW) distance. If a diseased tree is identified as at least 30% infested or dead within the normal ROW or outside of the normal ROW but is a threat to our primary power lines, our clearing crews will top (or cut) the tree to below our power lines. The remaining tree and cleanup are left up to the property owner.

Trees that are infested and identified as a threat to our secondary power lines, even if in the ROW, will be the responsibility of the property owner.

Please note, Stearns Electric's arborist will attempt to contact all property owners at least three times before any trees are removed on member property. Learn more about signs to look for in an infested tree on the back of this handout.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF TREE DISEASE



EMERALD ASH BORER

Impacts all species of ash trees in Minnesota. Once an ash tree is infested with EAB, it will die if the tree is unprotected. As the larvae infestation grows, ash trees will usually die within 2 to 4 years after initial infestation.

SIGNS OF EMERALD ASH BORER:

You are more likely to see damage caused by EAB than to see the pests. EAB larvae are what cause damage to the trees. EAB can be identified with these signs:

- **Woodpecker Holes** – Woodpeckers like EAB larvae, so you may notice increased woodpecker holes or activity.
- **D-shaped Exit Holes** – When adults emerge from ash trees, they create a small, “D-shaped” hole.
- **S-Shaped Galleries** – a distinct S-shaped gallery under tree bark of an ash tree is a good indication that a tree has been infested with EAB.
- **Bark Cracks** - EAB larvae tunneling beneath the bark can cause the tree bark to split open and reveal the S-shaped galleries beneath.
- **Canopy Dieback** – Ash trees with many dead branches at the top of the tree could indicate an EAB infestation.
- **Blonding** - Trees infested with EAB show signs of “blonding” where the bark falls off to reveal the blonde color underneath.



OAK WILT TREE DISEASE

Impacts oak tree species. Red oak species die more quickly than white oak species. Tree death can occur in as little as four weeks in red oak species. White oak species tree death takes between 2 and 5 years, or longer.

SIGNS OF OAK WILT IN RED OAKS:

- Leaf wilting or leaf loss; look for leaves with brown edges and green centers.
- Wilting usually starts at the top or outer portions of the tree crown and quickly progresses downward.
- If bark is peeled back, blue staining on the wood surface might be visible.

SIGNS OF OAK WILT IN WHITE OAKS:

- Leaves with brown edges and green centers.
- Dark brown or black discoloration might be found on the wood surface when bark is peeled back.
- Walled-off fungal infections that look like rings or narrow discolored wood may be visible in the cross section of an infected branch.



DUTCH ELM TREE DISEASE

Impacts native elm tree species, but has less of an impact on Chinese, Japanese or Siberian Elm. Infected trees die depending on the susceptibility of the tree. It can take one season, or several years.

SIGNS OF DUTCH ELM TREE DISEASE:

- Leaves on one or more branches in outer crown turn yellow, wilt, then turn brown.
- Yellowing and wilting of leaves progresses down infected branch toward trunk of tree.
- Brown streaking can be visible along wilted branches if tree bark is removed.
- Black or brown sapwood streaks.

LEARN MORE

Visit our website, www.stearnsselectric.org/account-services/service-requests/tree-trimming/, for more information on Stearns Electric's tree trimming policy, tree diseases and how you can help.

Contact the Cooperative at (800) 962-0655 during regular business hours if you have any questions.