

RESOLUTION NO. RS2019-1669

A resolution to bring awareness to the Emerald Ash Borer epidemic's impending negative impact on Davidson County's native ash trees and urban tree canopy.

WHEREAS, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive species of beetle, known for its metallic green color, which feeds on, and ultimately destroys, all species of North American ash trees; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture has determined that Davidson County has the 4th highest number of ash trees in the State; and the EAB was first detected in Tennessee in 2010, and has been present in Davidson County since 2014; and

WHEREAS, Nashville has many beautiful native ash trees in parks, on school grounds, along city streets and waterways, and in neighborhoods and private yards; and

WHEREAS, the EAB is projected to kill all native ash trees in Davidson County, estimated to represent around 10% of Metro's urban tree canopy, within the next five to ten years; and

WHEREAS, EAB larvae feed under the bark of ash trees, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients, such that a tree can die in one to three years after the first symptoms of infestation appear; and

WHEREAS, symptoms of an EAB infestation in an ash tree include leaf loss and dying branches; D-shaped, pencil-sized holes from where adult beetles exit the tree; blonding patches of bark and stripping of bark by woodpeckers, who feed on the larvae; and

WHEREAS, if an ash tree is less than 20% infected, chemical injection treatments applied by a homeowner or a licensed professional arborist are most effective, and the spring of 2019 may be a homeowners' last best hope to have beloved ash trees successfully treated; and

WHEREAS, a tree which is severely infected can be left to die naturally, if in an open area where its falling will not harm a person or property, or it can be removed responsibly by a qualified arborist. The earlier an infested tree is proactively removed, the safer for the homeowner and the lower the cost; and

WHEREAS, EAB infestation quickly weakens a tree, making it very brittle, leading to sudden cracking and shattering, and after only one or two years of mortality, an EAB infested ash tree can snap in half unexpectedly and dangerously; and

WHEREAS, infected ash wood should be chipped into pieces no larger than one inch to destroy the EAB's ability to live, and Metro Nashville's brush collection program meets this standard; and

WHEREAS, whenever a tree is removed, another tree of a non-ash variety should be planted. Metro Nashville has partnered with the Cumberland River Compact for "Root Nashville" – a campaign with a goal of planting 500,000 trees across Davidson County by 2050 to increase and diversify Nashville's tree canopy, which is already dwindling due to development pressures and will be further adversely impacted by the removal of ash trees; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Tree Advisory Committee has an EAB Speaker's Bureau and an informational brochure for neighborhoods and civic groups, and ash tree identification and EAB management options can be found at trees.nashville.gov; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan to provide policies to protect public safety on Metro-managed property is in progress and its recommendations will require budgetary support; and

WHEREAS, it is important to bring awareness to the impending Emerald Ash Borer devastation in Davidson County and provide the citizens of Nashville, Metro Department leadership, and elected officials with the information to best address the fiscal, life safety, and environmental impacts of this epidemic.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the detrimental impact of the Emerald Ash Borer to ash trees in Nashville and Davidson County and encourages Metro Government Departments and the public to seek out information on management options.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Council Office is directed to prepare a copy of this Resolution to be presented to the Director to Public Works, the Director of the Parks Department, the Director of Metro Nashville Public Schools Facilities Department, the Director of General Services, and the Director of the Finance Department.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Angie Henderson
Member of Council