**TIMELY TIPS APRIL 2018**

**THE EAB (Emerald Ash Borer)**

I learned about the Emerald Ash Borer because of this past winter. Storms and power outages left our nerves frazzled and our yards a mess. Trees and their limbs were down everywhere. One of my friends described her winter-wrecked lawn as a giant game of pick-up-stix.

Mainly though, I noticed the Ash trees. They were severely damaged from the wind and heavy snow. I started researching why our ash trees are failing. I knew that many of them began the winter already weak due to “Ash Decline” - any of several blights affecting ashes in the Northeast: ash yellows (when bacteria attack the phloem of the tree), canker fungi, droughts, and several possible viruses. But unfortunately, now I have learned that our ashes don’t stand a chance. The final blow will be the Emerald Ash Borer: a creepy crawler that eats through a tree’s transport system and effectively starves the tree.

In the US Emerald Ash Borers attack only ash trees, members of the genus Fraxinus: The Black Ash (Fraxinus nigra), the Green Ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) and the White Ash (Fraxinus americana).

White ash is native and the most common ash in NYS. In fact, NY has more white ash than any other state. It prefers rich, well-drained soils. White ash is unique and sought after for production of handles, oars, baseball bats, furniture, cabinetry, flooring, and other items that require high strength and resilience.

Green ash grows in moist bottom-lands, or on stream banks, and is hardy in extreme climates. Green ash is a keystone species in swamp forests, especially on the Lake Ontario Plain and along the St. Lawrence River. It is the ash most commonly planted along streets, in parks, and in home landscapes. Green ash is often sold as white ash.

Black ash is native, but uncommon throughout much of NY.

All the ashes provide food and shelter for the forest fauna. They are an important part of our ecosystems.

EAB is native to China and eastern Asia. It seems to have been accidentally introduced to North America in imported wood packaging or crating material.

The EAB was first discovered in the US in May 2002 near Detroit Michigan, and in July 2002 in Ontario. The first NY infestation was discovered in Randolph, in 2009 (south of Buffalo, west of Elmira, shares a border with PA). In 2010 EAB was found along the Hudson River Valley and has since spread to 30 counties. Westchester has the bug. According to Jerry Giordano of Cornell Cooperative Extension it has been found in Peekskill, Yorktown and Cortlandt. Most northern Westchester towns are in the quarantine area.

EAB is a very small metallic/shiny, emerald green beetle with a coppery red or purple abdomen. It’s smaller than a penny; about the size of a cooked grain of rice. It has 4 life stages: adult, egg, larva and pupa. Adults are most common in June and July.

Signs and symptoms of infestation are: canopy die back, yellowing and browning of leaves, new growth at the bottom of the tree = suckering, D-shaped exit holes in the outer bark of branches and trunks (the “D” can be oriented in any direction), vertical bark splitting (due to larvae eating the connective tissue that holds the bark in place), “S” shaped tunnels in the exposed tree layers from the munching larvae, and lastly - woodpecker activity. Pileated woodpeckers love EAB.

If you have three or more of these signs at the same time it’s probably best to get some professional advice. A good place to start would be The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Infested trees probably can’t survive and most trees die within 2 to 4 years of becoming infested. EAB is responsible for the destruction of hundreds of millions of ash trees in the US.

There are prophylactic treatments available for healthy trees. They are expensive - a couple hundred dollars per tree, and only last a few years.

One of the most important things we can do is NOT move firewood. Leave any dead, or dying trees on your property. Do not spread the EAB unwittingly.

And, if EAB wasn’t enough of a headache, Mr. Giordano asked that I alert you to the latest invasive pest: the Spotted Lanternfly. This beast could seriously harm the country’s grape, orchard, and logging industries.