

Identify trees, help prevent spread of Emerald Ash Borer

In the 1990s, Dutch elm disease wiped out most of the elm trees in the United States. Since there was no cure, replanting trees was the only solution.

A popular replacement in southeastern Michigan was the ash tree because of its hardy nature. Sadly, this tree also is being decimated by an insect infestation - Emerald Ash Borer.

Emerald Ash Borer is believed to have been brought to our area on a wooden pallet shipped from Asia in 1997. The borer has no known natural enemies in the United States and is proliferating at an alarming rate.

So what can you do about it?

First, learn to identify ash trees by their distinctive leaves and bark. They have several leaves

per leaf stem that are located across from each other.

Secondly, learn to detect signs of decline. These signs include: crown of the tree does not leaf out and growth is halted; bark on the trunk shows signs of "cracking," visible D-shaped exit holes on the trunk, or vertical splits in the bark.

What should you do if you detect Emerald Ash Bore? Currently, there is a quarantine on moving ash trees and ash wood products in metro Detroit. The wood should be burned to prevent further spread of this disease. While there is no known cure for this insect, you can prevent infestation by applying Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control at the base of healthy trees less than five inches in diameter.

Richard Vespa is vice president of landscape design and installation for English Gardens. If you suspect or are unsure of Emerald Ash Borer infestation, bring in an affected area to any English Gardens store for a diagnosis.

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Containers hold interest with plants

Now that we've been able to get out in our gardens for a few weeks, here are some thoughts that may be of interest. If you are growing plants in pots:

Combine plants with different textures and colors for added interest. Keep color schemes simple. White and pastel shades are more visible in shady locations.

Choose containers in proportion to the plant to keep the arrangement balanced. A tall container drains more quickly than a shallow one. Use a large container such as a tub with a trellis in it so vines can grow and form a privacy screen; or use tall plants.

A row of potted plants atop a retaining wall will soften the hard look.

Plastic and other manmade containers hold water longer than terra-cotta pots do.

If you have a large, heavy plant, set the container on a dolly (the saucer kind with three wheels on the bottom) to facilitate moving it.

Set potted houseplants in the garden to create surprising effects or add a tropical touch.

Try the following to save water: Mulch saves the evaporation of moisture from the soil, and keeps the upper layer

cooler. If you don't mulch, keep the garden weeded (they're voracious drinkers).

Water in the morning on a calm day. Don't water unless the plants need it; don't water if it's going to rain. If you have an automatic system, change the settings according to the weather.

Fix any leaks in couplings, tubing and hoses. (Leaky connectors can waste huge amounts of water.) Adjust the sprinkler head to aim water at plants. Stop watering if runoff occurs.

Try adding hydrogel to the soil. These are polymer crystals that absorb and hold water. Follow package directions.

Grow drought-tolerant plants. If the garden is in a windy, exposed location, plan to build a windbreak to shelter the garden and slow drying.

Capture and recycle water from air conditioners, dehumidifiers and rain gutters; and catch rainwater. Drop a tablet to repel mosquitoes in the water.

Use soaker hoses. A new one on the market is reported to be a "cost-effective and efficient way to water landscaping, border areas and gardens," according to Mike Broedhoe, marketing director, Nelson Consumer Products. It is called the Simple Soaker because it's easy to set up, adjust and use. It will save time, water and hassles.

The spray patterns are adjustable; snap-on deflectors allow for a half-circle spray pattern. If you wish, this soaker can be left in the same location year-round once it's installed. Find this new



These containers enhance an entrance.

product at ACE, Home Depot and Target; retail price starts at \$29.99.

SEMINAR

Nature & Earth Inc. has announced a seminar, Perennials for All Seasons, to take place Saturday, May 24, at Gerych's, 713 Silver Lake Road in Fenton. Registration begins at 9:45 a.m., and the program at 10:30 a.m.

The purpose of the seminar is to provide attendees with a reliable and interesting selection of perennials that will make their gardens bloom from spring to fall.

Colleen Traylor will concentrate on easy-care perennials that can tolerate our Michigan climate and help put an end to that old joke definition of a perennial ("a plant that, had it lived, would have come up year after year"). You'll enjoy this

program! Cost for the slide presentation and lecture, including lunch, is \$40 (non-refundable). Visa and MasterCard accepted. For additional information and to register, call Michael Saint at (248) 620-7188, or Colleen Traylor at (248) 726-6872. Visit Natureearthinc@bellsouth.net. One dollar of each registration will be donated to the Master Gardener Program.

GoodGardenWord Side-dressing: For plants growing in rows, typically in veggie gardens, spread a band of fertilizer along either side of the row, scratch it lightly into the soil, then water it in.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

CHALLENGE

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fun," Main said in the left.

The new owner of the empty lot is thinking of a contemporary or cutting edge look, with a budget between \$25,000 and \$40,000, Mathis said. Its style features clean lines, exposed beams and exposed brick walls.

Krass, Main and Premba will prepare individual proposals for presentations they will make to the homeowner in June. These presentations will be filmed for the show.

After the owner chooses one of the proposals, Pie Town Productions will choose for two more filming shoots: one of a "shopping trip" for the materials, and one of a walk-through of the finished project with the homeowner. The program featuring the project will air sometime next year.

To find the designers, Pie Town Productions did research through the American Society of Interior Designers. The research also involved visiting

the designers' Web sites, and interviewing them about the type of work they do and whether they would be interested in being on the show.

Each Designer's Challenge program begins with the homeowners talking about the design challenge, what they had in mind and what their budget is. The three professional interior designers are then introduced to the viewers.

The designers meet with the homeowners. Each designer is shown presenting his or her proposal to resolve the challenge, using such elements as drawings, design schemes, swatches, paint chips and graphics to help explain the ideas. The homeowners select one of the plans. The program then features highlights of the process as the work is done, and ends with a "before and after" sequence.

"We won't take on a project for a (budget of) less than \$20,000," Mathis said. "We've gone as high as \$80,000 to \$100,000." An exception was a nursery project that had a \$5,000 budget, he said.

SAVING WATER

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benefit assists Rose Hill treatment facility

Orchard Lake Road at Maple. Each year, members of the Rose Hill Horticulture team care for nearly 1,200 roses after they arrive as tiny bare root cuttings in the winter.

After several months of work, dedication and care, the plants are ready for resale in mid-May at English Gardens. A specially designed tag affixed to each plant identifies it as a Rose Hill rose and provides information on the Rose Hill mission.

The roses retail for \$24.99. More than 20 varieties of roses can be purchased at the Royal Oak/Troy store, located at 4901 Coolidge Highway, north of 14 Mile, and the West Bloomfield store, 6370

English Gardens will host the first-ever Rose Hill Day at two metro Detroit locations 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, May 17.

English Gardens will sell the roses to help support the Holly, Mich.-based private, nonprofit rehabilitation and treatment facility for people with mental illness.

Rose Hill master gardeners will be available to discuss rose care, and additional staff members will also be on hand to talk about the Rose Hill treatment program.

The Rose Hill rose program is part of a nationally recognized form of therapy that allows residents to participate in challenging and supportive work opportunities to

restore self-esteem and assist in recovery.

A longtime friendship between John Darin, president of English Gardens, and Dan Kelly, founder of Rose Hill, sparked the partnership project.

"This is a win-win situation for English Gardens and Rose Hill," said Darin.

"We are able to offer our customers a great selection of roses and the Rose Hill residents are one step closer to living independent lives."

The sales will take place at the Royal Oak/Troy store, located at 4901 Coolidge Highway, north of 14 Mile, and the West Bloomfield store, 6370

1992, is a comprehensive rehabilitation and treatment program for adults with major psychiatric disorders.

It offers residential programs for up to 51 individuals at a time; a transitional living program for an additional 20 people; and a community support program for individuals who are living independently. www.rosehill-center.com.

Founded in 1954, English Gardens is southeast Michigan's largest independent garden center. The family-owned business offers top quality garden products, flowering and tropical plants, fresh-cut and silk flowers and landscape design and installation.

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Rose Hill Center, founded in

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