

# Finally -- Hope For American Elms

The first good news for elm growers since the Dutch elm disease was discovered in 1932 has come from the Dutch Elm Research Institute.

Those who still have elms can protect them. If not they can start planting them with confidence that their trees will grow to maturity.

If you have an elm tree in your area which measures 10 feet or more in circumference at eye level, the institute will present a plaque to the owner. The tree will be designated as an historic landmark to be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations. It would be entered in the honor roll of elms.

The Elm Research Institute is a volunteer, non-profit organization with saving the American elm from extinction as its only objective. John P. Hansel, executive director, says they have developed the tools to protect 50 out of every 100 elms with a carefully applied control system.

According to the institute: "If you have on your property a single American Elm, you have a specimen of what botanists have described as the most beautiful thing that grows in the Western Hemisphere. No other tree is comparable to this unique American species that rises to more majestic height, with more gracefully architected branches than elms in any other part of the world. "It is an ornament to your home and property that adds unequalled dignity and charm. Its loss would leave a scar that would never completely heal. "How much is your home worth without its elms?" is a

question few elm owners care even to consider. But it is certain that in terms of real estate, the value of an elm represents a large factor in the value of the home it shades. Where specimen elms have fallen to disease, the value of costly property has fallen with them.

"Given the care that will safeguard them from Dutch elm disease, your elms have a life expectancy of three hundred years. Surely the inspiration and enjoyment they can afford you and your heirs, merit the modest cost of preservation.

"However impressive are your public buildings...shops, schools...churches...If you live in a town where historic elms lend shade and elegance to city streets, parks, public squares--these are your most precious monuments.

"Not only for their aesthetic value but for their beneficial effect on the environment, your elms merit all the care you can provide. Their cooling shade actually reduces summer temperatures 15 degrees to 25 degrees and they help purify the air you breathe by utilizing carbon dioxide and liberating oxygen. As a factor in noise abatement, tree lined streets absorb a high percentage of sound reducing the nervous strain from mounting city traffic.

"For the protection of urban property values it is sound economics to protect your city's elms at any cost--far less costly than removing dead trees and the price of urban decay that often follows.

"Specialized Elm Care" is the key to preservation of public and private elms. It is a

new concept in disease control proven effective in practical application and outlined in the following pages--a tool you can employ right now to preserve the elms you can't afford to lose.

"SPECIALIZED ELM CARE" is only as good as the professional tree expert who applies it. Accurate knowledge of the beetle breeding, feeding and emergence cycles is an essential part of the program, as well as the capacity to gauge the requirements of each tree based on height, girth and foliage. There is no substitute for the arborist's responsibility and experience.

"In applying 'Specialized Elm Care' to prevent infection, timing and coverage are the key factors. Coverage of the crown of the tree must be thorough under conditions suitable for application. Here are the steps involved.

"Dormant Spray -- We recommend a 2 per cent concentration of Methoxychlor (new government approved spray) from a Xylene oil base applied, in water, at temperature of 40 degrees to 50 degrees prior to leaf emergence. Experience indicates that 1 gal. per foot of tree height is a rule of thumb for hydraulic sprayers, correspondingly less for mist blowers. However, the judgment of the qualified tree expert to achieve maximum coverage provides the best assurance of protection.

"Leaf Spray -- Important tests by qualified investigators show that a second mistblow spray of 1 per cent Methoxychlor from 50 per cent wettable powder plus Benlate benomyl fungicide at 8.0 lbs. per 100 gals. applied 1 week after leaves reach full size further reduces the possibility of infection. Should fungus be introduced by bark beetle feeding, the absorption of the fungicide through the leaves and young bark will help prevent growth of the fungus and restrict its spread into the system of the tree. Use of this combination of insecticide and fungicide also provides protection against leaf hoppers which spread phloem necrosis, leaf-eating insects, cankerworms, spanworm and gypsy moth.

"Feeding -- enough to maintain tree in healthy, natural condition, usually not more than once every three years.

"Pruning -- as needed, but not during period when beetles are active. Generally May through August except for emergency treatment when "flagging" is indicated (see below).

"THE LATEST FIELD tests indicate that a combination of pruning and fungicide injection give many infected trees a good chance for survival providing the first symptoms of disease are reported promptly to a qualified tree expert. Here are the steps involved:

"Surveillance -- Elms should be checked daily during months of June, July and August for any sign of waving, known as "flagging" in the crown. Should any limb or series of limbs show substantial yellowing of leaves, this should be reported the same day to your tree expert.

"Injection -- Recent work by qualified investigators show that early injection of the fungicide such as Benlate benomyl one to three days after first report of flagging will inhibit further spread of the disease. This material is introduced into the system of the tree by way of capsules with feeder tubes placed on the trunk approximately six feet above ground level.

"Pruning -- At the same time, limbs that show flagging should be cut off at a point where they join the main trunk. If done in time, this will help prevent travel of the fungus downward into the main system of the tree.

"Identification -- Although most cases of D.E.D. can be diagnosed on sight, it is wise to make positive identification by a subsequent laboratory test. This can be done by your tree expert. However, it should not delay the above immediate treatment makes it impossible to delay action for laboratory confirmation of diagnosis. In other words treat first, confirm diagnosis later (it may be too late to treat at all.

"WHAT DOES IT COST?...? "In relation to the value of an elm by any standard, the cost of "Specialized Elm Care" is very small.

"Allowing for variations in local rates, and commencing with an average two-foot diameter elm, the cost should range from \$50 to \$100 per year for an individual tree, with lower rates when additional trees are included. (Obviously, municipal elms could be treated at a fraction

of this cost.) This is no more than the cost of a "service contract" for many appliances with a life expectancy of only 10 to 15 years. It is the least we can do to protect a priceless possession.

"Specialized Elm Care" is equally effective when applied to public trees providing sufficient funds are allocated and all spraying is carefully supervised. (This can be achieved only through the efforts of concerned citizens

through an action plan which should include the following steps:

1. "MAKE THE elm a municipality -- pass an Elm Protection Ordinance ...

2. "Make a complete census of every urban elm on private and public property.

3. "Make a complete census of every urban elm on private and public property.

4. "Make it mandatory to treat all public and private trees with "Specialized Elm Care" for prevention of DED infection. On privately owned trees, property owner should be required to furnish certificate showing "Specialized Elm Care" has been contracted for prior to May 1, in default of which the city may furnish this care and assess owner for the cost.

5. "Maintain constant surveillance of all public and private elms.

6. "Make it mandatory to treat all public and private trees with "Specialized Elm Care" therapy once DED has been detected. Should private

property owner fail to treat his trees promptly, city should have right to do so and assess him the cost.

7. "Make it mandatory to remove all dead trees (except selected "traps") prior to next beetle emergence period. Privately owned trees to be removed by city and cost billed to owner if he does not comply promptly.

8. "Leave selected dead elms standing, after pruning back to main trunk, to act as broodwood traps for next generation of beetles. One tree per block is generally sufficient. Remove these traps during following winter.

9. "Make it mandatory to strip bark from or burn all dead elm wood.

10. "Appoint a city forester or tree warden to administer the "Specialized Elm Care" program. Make it mandatory that he attend a refresher course each year sponsored by E.R.I.

For more information about elm care and the historic elm census write to: J. P. Hansel, Elm Research Institute, 60 W. Prospect St., Waukegan, N. J. 07463.



GILLET AVENUE (above) in Waukegan, Ill., as it appeared in the summer of 1962. Below: the same street seven years later, with its avenue of elms wiped out by Dutch elm disease.



represent so much beauty and real-estate value in a town? The protection they need is against neglect and therein lies the key to the kind of city ordinance that can save our urban elms.

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