

King Township starts removing dead ash trees

King Township staff began cutting down several hundred trees killed by the emerald ash borer, an invasive species that has killed tens of millions of ash trees in North America.

"These trees are completely dead and many are on Township-owned boulevards next to sidewalks," said Mayor Steve Pellegrini. "While we certainly don't enjoy cutting down trees, it needs to be done to keep the public safe."

The tree removal, which is very similar to the [expert tree removal in Augusta, GA](#) that's being performed, began Monday in Nobleton. Arbor-Tech, the company that is doing the removal, will start in Nobleton, then move on to King City, followed by Schomberg.

Staff estimate up to 300 or more boulevard trees need to be removed. The bulk of the trees are in the 20- to 25-year range. Additional trees in parks, open spaces and woodlots will be removed in the coming years.

This year will see the start of Phase 1 of the ash tree program, which will include the removal of the dead trees but not the stumps. It is more efficient to remove the stump and plant a new tree at the same time due to the hole created during the stumping process. Phase 2, which will start in the near future, will include the removal of the stumps and the planting of new trees. Phase 2 is expected to be a multi-year initiative.

Many boulevard trees in King are looking bad, according to Mayor Steve Pellegrini. The funds for replacing the trees will be a budget item for 2017 and the cost will be "significant," he said.

The issue of the emerald ash borer is not unique to King Township. Municipalities across southern Ontario and the north-east United States have grappled with the problem for years. York Region has developed an EAB management plan (<http://bit.ly/29uKvhB>). The emerald ash borer was first detected in North America in 2002. Native to Asia, the beetle has proven to be highly destructive in its new range. Since its arrival, it has killed tens of millions of ash trees and continues to spread into new areas, with considerable economic and ecological impacts.

Canadian Forest Service scientists estimate that costs for treatment, removal and replacement of trees affected by emerald ash borer in Canadian municipalities may reach \$2 billion over a 30-year period.

Adults feed on the edges of the foliage, but it is the feeding of the larvae between the bark and sapwood which ultimately kills the tree. The tree's transportation system, which moves nutrients throughout the tree and brings water up from the roots, is destroyed by the feeding of the larvae.