

CVC to host workshop next week on the Emerald Ash Borer

People should not be fooled by a seemingly innocent little beetle.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is on a deadly mission and it has a voracious appetite for native ash trees.

Area residents can learn about the threat posed by EAB at a free information session hosted by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) Sept. 25 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Alder Street Recreation Centre's TD Canada Trust Room, 275 Alder St., Orangeville. The workshop will be held in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Dufferin County, the Town of Orangeville, Upper Credit Field Naturalists and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

Forestry experts and ecologists will present the history, spread and biology of EAB, and discuss current and future impacts to Dufferin County and Orangeville. Participants will learn about impacts to street trees, yard trees and woodlots, as well as what they can do in their communities and on their properties to manage those impacts.

CVC recently concluded its summer EAB monitoring program that used 44 traps at locations throughout the middle and northern portions of the Credit River watershed (from northern Mississauga through to Orangeville). CVC confirmed 17 sites with EAB, including eight privately-owned properties.

Many landowners with ash trees on their properties don't yet know about the extent of the EAB threat, said CVC Forester Zoltan Kovacs. Learning about EAB is the first step in dealing with it. Landowners actually have a number of options available to them, from treating ash trees to replanting.

The monitoring program revealed EAB in a number of CVC owned conservation areas, including Ken Whillans Resource Management Area, Silver Creek Conservation Area and Meadowvale Conservation Area. Based on current levels of infestation, CVC ecologists project that EAB will be present throughout much of the Credit River watershed by 2015.

EAB is an invasive insect, meaning it's not native to the region and has devastating effects on native plants and animals. Originally from Asia, EAB is spreading throughout southern Ontario, into the Credit River watershed, killing North American ash trees.

EAB larvae (young) feed just beneath the bark of ash trees and disrupt the movement of water and nutrients. This pest continues to spread north through Ontario by flying from ash tree to ash tree. The rapid, large-scale spread of EAB, however, is facilitated by transporting firewood, nursery stock and logs. EAB has already killed millions of trees, but early detection can slow its spread and damage.

CVC has worked with its partners to monitor the spread of EAB throughout the Credit River watershed. By 2009, EAB was detected in the urban southern areas of the watershed, including Mississauga, Brampton and Oakville. In the summer of 2013 CVC detected the beetle's presence in the middle and northern portions of the watershed.

Due to the large presence of EAB, CVC has discontinued large scale monitoring and is now shifting its focus to EAB management activities. CVC is developing specific management plans for each of its properties. Each plan will take into consideration the property's recreational usage, ecological value, ash tree density and opportunities for ash tree preservation. The goal of CVC is to mitigate the effects of EAB on its properties while maintaining visitor safety and preserving the important ecological function of these natural areas as much as possible.

Residents play a significant role in helping control EAB by not moving firewood and monitoring ash trees for evidence of EAB activity. For more information on how to identify the signs and symptoms of EAB, visit CVC's website at www.creditvalleyca.ca/eab

This workshop is offered free of charge, but registration is required by Sept. 24. Register online at www.creditvalleyca.ca/eabdufferin or contact Holly Nadalin, CVC's program coordinator for Headwaters Outreach at 1800-668-5557, ext. 449 or hnadalin@creditvalleyca.ca