

Town calls for Emerald Ash Borer action

By Nick Fernandes

Caledon council has put out a call to action to the federal government, as the Province fails to stop the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer that threatens Ontario's important forests.

Councillors recently passed a motion calling on the federal and Provincial governments to take leadership roles in recognizing the need to support urban forestry.

The Emerald Ash Borer is an invasive and highly distinct species of beetle native to Asia. True to its name, the species bores into the wood of the ash tree to lay eggs, and the larva can kill the tree by blocking the flow of nutrients. Despite the large numbers of trees that have been destroyed throughout the U.S. and Canada, the federal government has been largely unable to stop the spread of the beetle, and the costs of repair and replanting in the wake of the infestation is estimated to reach \$2 billion.

The motion stated that especially vulnerable to infestations of this kind are Ontario's urban forests, which do not fall under the scope of the government's forestry research programs and surveys. Federal mandates do not account for the great importance urban trees have for cities and towns. These trees act as windbreakers, improve air quality, reduce temperature of streets, filter storm water, and reduce exposure to UV rays.

Council called for forestry programs to provide support to municipalities for sustainability programs and efforts against the Borer, and for current programs to include urban forestry as a research category.