Williams Lawn Care, Inc.
772 Schwartz Rd., Lancaster, NY 14086 716-684-7800
WilliamsLawnCareInc@gmail.com
Williams-LawnCare.com

Critical Oak and Elm Tree Information!

This letter is to inform you about serious threats to your Elm and/or Oak tree(s) and the treatment available to protect them. (Dutch Elm Disease affecting Elms, Oak Wilt affecting Oaks.) We've treated for Dutch Elm Disease for many years, but not always with success. While we cannot guarantee success in treating for these diseases, we would like to tell you about the best protection currently available.

Dutch Elm Disease wiped out millions of Elm trees in the Buffalo area in the 1960's and 1970's. We've noticed over the last 10 years that it's making a comeback. It can attack a tree and kill it the same year. In some cases, once symptoms are visible, it can be too late to save the infected tree. For this disease, there are two primary treatment options available. We use the injection treatment more commonly used with a Fungicide called Propiconazole.

Oak Wilt, as of this writing, is not officially in the Buffalo area. However, it has been found in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and the northern area of Canandaigua Lake. All Oak trees are susceptible to the disease, but trees in the Red Oak family are the most susceptible. (Note: Pin Oaks are in the Red Oak family.) Once infected, Red Oaks cannot be saved, and can die in 30-60 days! Preventive treatment is the method of choice. White Oaks, once infected, can take 1-2 years to die without treatment protection, but can live for at least 5-7 years with treatment. Currently, they cannot be 'cured' of the disease. For Oak Wilt, we use the best treatment available, which is also the Fungicide Propiconazole.

We've only recently started injecting Oak trees for Oak Wilt, and so far, so good. We have many customers that treat their Elm trees preventatively; for the most part this has been successful. However, we have lost a few Elm trees, even some otherwise healthy-looking trees at treatment. For this reason, we want to make it abundantly clear that our treatment, while the very best treatment available, goes with some risk. Of course, Elms or Oaks that go untreated are completely unprotected and vulnerable.

Continued on reverse side ➜

BOTH diseases are spread in either of two ways: First, if a nearby Elm or Oak is infected, the disease can spread to a neighboring tree via intertwining root systems. Second, Bark Beetles carrying the disease on their bodies can fly (vector) to other trees and spread the disease to the sap of those uninfected trees. This is why it's very important not to expose the tree sap by pruning during the growing season, specifically between April 1st to August 31st. If pruning must be done, then the exposed wound should be sealed with tree wound paint. Any latex paint can be used. Ideally, pruning tools should be disinfected between cuts.

Symptoms for BOTH diseases are similar due to the way the diseases infect the tree. BOTH diseases clog up the tree's vascular system, preventing movement of water and nutrients throughout the tree. Think of it like a plugged cardiovascular system in a person. When these tree diseases strike, they plug up the vessels that the tree uses to stay alive. Below are the signs of infection for both diseases:

1. The FIRST sign is wilting. Why? Much like a house plant without water, the leaves on a tree start to wilt because they are not getting water through the tree's vascular system. When leaf wilting is visible (usually starting at the top of the tree), it may be too late for treatment if most of the leaves have wilted.
2. The SECOND sign is leaves starting to show yellow or light brown spots starting around the outer edges. This will typically show up in entire branches, one at a time (called flagging). When more than 5-10% of the tree canopy has started to turn yellow or light brown, it's usually too late for treatment to save Elms and Oaks.
3. The THIRD sign is dark brown leaves that shrink, curl, and eventually drop off, often occurring rapidly as the disease progresses. At this point, it's too late to save the tree.

What can be done to manage these diseases? If Elms or Oaks show no symptoms, they can be injected with a fungicide, but this needs to be done every year. Red Oaks need to be protected before showing symptoms. Elms and White Oaks can still be saved if showing only 5-10% symptoms. Any branches that are showing symptoms need to be pruned out (see top of page for recommendations). Any trees that are dead need to be removed and the stumps ground. Pruning and removal are critical!

Even with these measures taken, there is still no guarantee a tree will survive with treatment.

The label for Propiconazole (Brand name Propizol) says that you can expect 1-3 years of control. Our experience is that you can only reasonably expect 1 year of control. Therefore, these tree(s) should be injected every year. Some labels for this product recommend treatment every year.

Another point to consider regarding Elm trees is that, in addition to Dutch Elm Disease, there is another disease called "Elm Yellows" which can kill Elm trees. This is not very common, and unfortunately, there is no treatment to save an affected tree. Another point to consider regarding Oak trees is the Spongy Moth (formerly called Gypsy Moth). These insects can defoliate Oak trees, weakening them. We've found and treated for this pest in the Buffalo area, but the population has subsided for the time being.

Attached to this letter is a proposal to treat your trees. We know you will give careful consideration to all the issues related to treatment.

Sincerely,

David E. Williams
ISA Certified Arborist

Lisa M. Williams

CERTIFIED ARBORIST ISA

David Williams
NY-5869A

NEW YORK STATE ARBORISTS ISA CHAPTER, INC.