

Dutch Elm Disease

What is Dutch elm disease?

Dutch elm disease (DED) is caused by a deadly fungus that was introduced to North America from Europe in the 1920s. The disease is spread by elm bark beetles that carry the fungus to healthy trees, or by root grafting. The fungus stops the flow of water within an infected tree, quickly killing it.

The American elm is very susceptible to DED, while Siberian elms are usually tolerant. Disease symptoms usually appear first on a single branch, with wilting and yellowing leaves, with more of the tree affected as the disease progresses.

Dutch elm disease has spread through the eastern half of Saskatchewan.

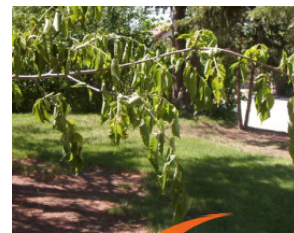
1981 - Saskatchewan's first case was a single tree in Regina in 1981, which was removed. The next detection was in 1990, in a park near Estevan. Since then, DED has become established, spreading east to west along river valleys with native American elm stands, including:

- Cumberland Delta
- Northeast Qu'Appelle Valley
- Carrot and Red Deer river valleys
- Souris River in southeast

How can we manage DED to protect Saskatchewan's elms?

As management is challenging in wild stands and rural areas, protection efforts are most effectively focused on urban forests, slowing disease spread by promptly identifying, removing and properly disposing of DED-infected trees. Other management tools include:

- pruning programs
- planting diverse tree species
- beetle population control
- research
- public awareness programs



It is illegal to prune any elms during the annual ban period. Fresh cuts attract the beetles that spread DED, and they're active during this time!

Do not prune elms from April 1 to August 31.

EXCEPTIONS:

- storm damaged trees
- authorization from a ministry or municipal inspector
- Municipal or Crown corp. employees who consider it necessary to ensure public safety or to avoid property damage
- shearing of an elm hedge
- completely removing an elm tree, and treating or removing the stump below ground level.

DISPOSAL:

Dispose of elm wood from pruning removing a tree at the nearest elm disposal site for the municipality in which the tree is located, during the next operating hours of the disposal site. Operators of elm disposal sites must ensure they dispose of wood in a timely manner by:

- burning all bark from the elm tree
- completely burying the elm tree, covered with at least 25 cm of soil.

Do NOT store, transport or use elm firewood.

It is against the law. No person may store, use, sell or transport any elm tree for use as firewood.