

Dutch Elm Disease

Dutch Elm Disease is a fungal infection inside the tree that interferes with water passage from the roots up to the body of elm trees. Elm trees native to North America are extremely susceptible. The symptoms of Dutch Elm Disease include wilting and browning of the leaves in the crown. Upon closer examination, the fungus can be seen in the vascular tissue under the bark of infected branches. The fungus causes tan to brown streaking in the cream colored wood.



Dutch Elm Disease has 2 ways of being spread from one elm tree to the next. The first is through root grafts which are likely when elm trees are within 30 to 50 feet of each other. Roots from one elm tree naturally graft to roots of another elm and pass the fungus along from an infected tree to a healthy tree. Streets with many elm trees in a row have been devastated when all elm trees have quickly succumbed to the disease once one tree in the row was infected with Dutch Elm Disease. The second way Dutch Elm Disease is spread is by elm bark beetles. Elm bark beetles are small insects which breed beneath the bark of diseased or declining elm trees, dead elm branches, and elm firewood. Newly hatched beetles emerge from wood infected with Dutch Elm Disease and carry spores of the fungus to healthy elm trees through their feeding activities.

Unfortunately, there still is no cure for Dutch Elm Disease once an elm tree has it. Because of this, it is very important to promptly remove infected trees and remove the bark from elm logs.