

Oakwoods Subdivision Consultation

Ash Tree Analysis and Common Area Conditions

The Ash Tree

The Ash is a native Illinois tree generally found in woodlots, right of ways, and forest edges. Ash trees had become extremely popular as landscape trees in yards, boulevards, parks and medians in the 1980's and 1990's. Many communities overplanted ash trees as the tree was very hardy, fast grower and has beautiful fall color. There are four types of ash: green, white, blue and black. Majority of the Ash trees in Bloomington are either green or white ash. All of the ash trees in the Oakwoods subdivision are green or white ash.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a small green metallic beetle approximately ½" long. The EAB was first discovered in Canada in 2002 and since has done extensive damage to ash populations in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and now Illinois. Over 30 million trees have been lost to EAB. EAB attacks only ash trees in the genus Fraxinus.

The larvae of the EAB spread throughout the cambium area of the tree, creating galleries that inhibit the uptake of water and nutrients through the tree, essentially strangling the tree resulting in death. When the larvae mature into adult beetles, they exit through a D shaped holes approximately 1/8" in diameter.

The most visible sign of EAB infestation is crown dieback. Branches at top of the crown will begin to die as water and nutrient uptake is restricted. As the tree declines, suckers will sprout from the base or from younger branches. The bark may split and woodpeckers may feed on the beetle.

The only 100 percent effective way to kill the EAB is to remove the ash tree and grind the material in a chipper. Chemical treatments are available for EAB with different levels of effectiveness. It is most cost effective to remove and infested ash and replant. If replanting a group or establishing a new area, it is important to consider a tree planting plan that recommends a minimum 7% diversity level with the planted area.

Citizens can minimize the spread of EAB by taking the following steps:

1. *Do not move firewood. Burn all firewood by April 30th of each year*
2. *Do not transport ash material in and out of McLean County. Any ash material transported within the county must be covered between April 30th and September 1st. The City will not pick up ash from the streets during this time.*
3. *Do not trim, remove or otherwise work on an ash tree during this time period.*

Ash Trees to Monitor in the Oakwoods Common Areas

A walk through inventory of the common area revealed 28 ash trees. This is less than 1% of all the trees in the forested and open common areas, and the Oakwoods subdivision is not in danger of any canopy loss due to EAB. There are 9 ash trees that the homeowners association should consider taking action with in regards to EAB. None of these trees show signs of EAB at this time.

<u>Tree</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
1	Outlot next to 2520 Timberview	Remove/Replant
2	Median at Timberview and Clearbrook	Remove/Replant
3	8 Clearbrook on forest edge	Monitor
4	4 Cedar behind fence along 6 Points Road	Remove
5	4 Cedar behind fence along 6 Points Road	Remove
6	Playground Area	Remove/Replant
7	Playground Area	Remove/Replant
8	Playground Area	Remove/Replant
9	Playground Area	Remove/Replant

Specific replanting recommendations for these ash trees should be part of a comprehensive Oakwoods tree planting plan.

General Conditions of Forested Common Areas

The forested areas with the subdivision have the characteristics of a healthy oak/hickory type forest community native to central Illinois. The forested areas are highlighted with large specimen white oaks and shagbark hickories. There are many straight, healthy walnut trees that have substantial monetary value.

As with any tract of forested area with an urban environment, there are concerns that need to be addressed by the homeowners association. These concerns are non-native invasive honeysuckle, hazard trees and drainage issues.

Honeysuckle

Bush honeysuckle is a non-native plant that is spread rapidly by birds. Once established, it can rapidly invade and overtake a site forming a dense shrub layer that crowds and shades out native plant species. Kept unchecked, the honeysuckle can take over an area. The honeysuckle in Oakwoods is mainly on the smaller narrow outlets. Honeysuckle establishes itself on the edges and moves inward. The large forested interiors do not have a honeysuckle problem at this time. Oakwoods homeowners association should take steps to eradicate the honeysuckle in the common areas. Honeysuckle can be controlled through pulling or cutting and stump treatments.

Hazard Trees

There are many standing dead and decaying trees within the forested areas. This is common and part of a healthy forest. With people using the forested areas for recreation, the homeowners association should fell the hazard trees to the ground and let the wood decay into the ecosystem.

Creek and Drainage

The main large wooded outlots have a creek and storm drainage throughout. While the creek is working, many of the outlets are impeded by debris. Worst case scenario an outlet would become clogged and the subdivision would not properly drain, building up water or ice on streets and yards. The outlets should be cleaned out on a yearly basis or after a large storm. Small rip rap rocks placed at the mouth of the outlets will help to keep vegetation from growing up and blocking the outlet.

As the creek meanders through the forested areas, many trees are restricting the flow. This has caused several overly wet areas within the forest that were not naturally occurring. These trees and clogs should be removed from the creek. It is important to remember that within the oakwoods subdivision, all drainage eventually goes to the creek and through the forest. Any gas, oils, cleaners, etc that are washed down a driveway will eventually end up travelling through the woods.

Poison Ivy

There are small pockets of poison ivy scattered throughout the wooded areas. This can be easily treated with standard selective herbicides. Poison ivy does not pose a concern to the overall health of the forest, but is a problem for users.

General Conditions of Open Space Common Areas

The open space provides a unique opportunity for a comprehensive tree planting plan. There is ample open green space that could be enhanced by tree planting and a land use plan. In addition, the open area by the playground has the space for a formal soccer, football or baseball field if desired. The homeowners association should consider a commissioning a comprehensive diverse tree planting plan that focuses on native Illinois forest trees and some evergreens. The trees that are currently planted in the common areas would benefit from mulching and pruning.

The wetland area in outlots 229 and 179 should be further evaluated to determine if there is a drainage problem creating this wet area. The area is currently being overtaken with reed canary grass and willow trees. As this does not provide an immediate problem, the reed canary grass can spread into the turf over time. The willow trees may creep towards roads and asphalts and eventually cause upheaval. After the wetland area is further evaluated a determination can be made as to the extent, if any, of willow and reed canary grass control that is required.