



Maintenance – Dutch Elm Disease



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Discovered in the Netherlands in the 1920's, Dutch Elm disease is a fungus that is restricted to the elm species but not just the Dutch Elm. Once introduced it blocks the tree's ability to transfer water, causing its leaves to wilt and the tree to starve and die, usually within one or two seasons.

Dutch Elm disease is spread from one elm tree to another in two ways. Primarily it is transferred by the elm bark beetle. The beetles breed under the bark of dead or dying Elm wood. The young then emerge from the dead tree carrying the fungus with them until they find a healthy Elm where they begin to feed and spread the disease. The other way D.E.D. is spreading is by direct contact of an infected tree's root system with a neighboring healthy tree. It is this method of transfer that is the most difficult to prevent wiping out huge concentrations of the Elm tree across North America and Europe.

Chemical treatment of infected trees is difficult and very costly. At best this will only prolong the life of the tree for 5-10 years. D.E.D. control in general can be very difficult unless community wide surveys, sanitation and removal programs are used.

The careful removal of dead Elm to reduce the spread of the fungus is an ongoing process at Garrison. We will also continue with the planting of 15-20 different species of trees per year in areas that have been subject to Elm loss. In the past 5 years we have successfully planted over 100 healthy trees.

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