

Urban Forestry-related News in the Midwest

(August 23, 2014)

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OUTSIDE THE REGION, BUT OF POTENTIAL INTEREST:

Vin Diesel issues his own challenge to 'Plant a tree for Groot.' What kind of tree should it be?

[Vin-Diesel-redirects-ice-bucket-challenge-Plant-a-tree-for-Groot-video](#)

By David Clark Scott Christian Science Monitor, AUGUST 23, 2014

Does it take an actor with a fossil fuel surname to save the planet?

Hollywood action star Vin Diesel - a human with hickory hard muscles - is channeling his inner tree. OK, so maybe he's just channeling his latest role, the character of "Groot" in the hit Marvel Comics movie "Guardians of the Galaxy."

Groot is a large, extraterrestrial tree being of immense strength but with limited vocabulary. According to Marvel comics lore, the Flora Colossi have a language that is almost impossible to understand due to the stiffness of their larynxes, causing their speech to sound like they are simply repeating the phrase "I am Groot." Indeed, with one exception, this is Diesel's only line in the "Guardians" film.

Recommended: Think you know the odd effects of global climate change? Take our quiz.

Like many celebrities and ordinary mortals, Diesel took the now ubiquitous "Ice Bucket Challenge" but used the attention to redirect to another worthy cause.

On YouTube, Diesel called out Guardians director James Gunn to "plant a tree for Groot." Diesel later posted a photo of himself planting a tree. Gunn accepted the challenge. And so have some of Diesel's Facebook and Twitter followers.

Diesel doesn't provide any horticultural guidance or rationale. But there's at least one reason to plant a tree in the city.

Much like Groot in "Guardians," urban trees may save human lives – just not with as much fanfare.

A study of 10 US cities found that urban trees acted as filters, removing fine particulate pollution from the air.

"More than 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas containing over 100 million acres of trees and forests," said Michael T. Rains, Director of the US National Forest Service's Northern Research Station and Acting Director of the Forest Products Lab. "This research clearly illustrates that America's urban forests are critical capital investments helping produce clear air and water; reduce energy costs; and, making cities more livable. Simply put, our urban forests improve people's lives."

The study, "Modeled PM2.5 Removal by Trees in Ten U.S. Cities and Associated Health Effects," was published last June by the journal Environmental Pollution.

If you're taking up the "Plant a tree for Groot" challenge, what kind of tree should you plant?

Another recent study provides some guidance: Plant a Ginkgo tree.

The North American climate is changing and the Chicago Botanic Garden looked at what kinds of trees will grow best under the warming scenarios expected over the next 40-65 years.

The federally funded study looked at three climate scenarios developed in 2000 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The study looked at trees likely to thrive in the Chicago metropolitan area in 2020, 2050 and 2080 using such bioclimatic parameters as rainfall in the driest quarter of the year.

The Alliance for Community Trees reports:

Suitable plants under the "worst-case" climate scenario for 2050 were included in the resulting Chicago Botanic Garden Adaptive Planting List. The Autumn Gold Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba* 'Autumn Gold') emerged as one of the best performers, rated as suitable for planting along a street side, in a park or residential setting or as a "legacy tree" in a public garden. Fossil records show that the ginkgo – one of the oldest types of trees – once thrived in North America and Europe, but survived in parts of China.

"The ginkgo is now essentially extinct in the wild and grows almost entirely in cultivated landscapes around the world," said Dr. Andrew Bell of the Chicago Botanic Garden. "It appears to be one of the best-suited trees for a warming urban environment."

Legacy trees are expected to live more than 60 years, while trees planted in urban parks and residences live an average of 37 to 60 years. "Street trees" growing in a downtown environment have the shortest life expectancy, 13 years. Other trees likely to thrive in a variety of mid-century urban planting conditions are two types of elms that have shown resistance to Dutch Elm's Disease, the Valley Forge American Elm (*Ulmus americana* 'Valley Forge') and Accolade® Elm (*Ulmus* 'Morton Accolade™'), and the Village Green Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata* 'Village Green').

Go ahead and plant a tree for Groot. But make it a Ginkgo or a Valley Forge American Elm or a Zelkova.

ILLINOIS

Protecting a home sale from ash borer threat

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/ct-mre-0824-umberger-20140823-column.html>

Mary UMBERGER CHICAGO TRIBUNE (IL), 082314

Can an ash borer beetle have a deadly effect on a real estate deal?

Protecting a real estate deal from the ash borer threat

What if you were buying a home and were advised the furnace was operating on borrowed time? Or perhaps the kitchen appliances look as if they were manufactured during the Nixon administration.

Replacing these key components of your home is something you'd have to deal with relatively soon — and that could cost you significantly, so you'd factor that into your purchasing decision or price. What about the trees in the yard? Specifically, what about the ash trees?

It would seem to be a relevant question, given the increasingly dire scenario painted by tree experts as the emerald ash borer beetle munches its way through the ash tree population of more than a dozen states, so far.

"They're here," explained Beth Corrigan, community trees program coordinator at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle. "They've spread all the way down past central Illinois and into southern regions of the state."

They've also been found in Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and in two Canadian provinces, according to the federal government's stopthebeetle.info.

And without treatment, the insects will have a deadly effect on the ashes they love to nibble on, a message that the arboretum, the government, and conservation and other organizations have been trying to get across to the public for several years. There's a lot at stake. Ashes may make up 10 to 40 percent of a town's tree population, according to the arboretum.

Mature, canopied trees of all kinds play roles that homeowners might not notice until they're gone, Corrigan said. Most obviously, they contribute to a neighborhood feel, she said, as well as provide a home for wildlife.

And their shade can have a direct influence on reducing a home's need for air conditioning, she said.



A worker cuts down a tree infested by the emerald ash borer in Lincoln Park. (Nancy Stone, Chicago Tribune)

She cited studies that estimate mature trees may contribute 10 to 30 percent of a home's value.

But the threat of the ash borer isn't a real estate story — yet — according to Chicago experts, who said in an informal sampling of opinions that the insect doesn't seem to be on homebuyers' radar screens.

"There's an awareness of it," said James Kinney, incoming president of the Illinois Association of Realtors, though he said he has heard little discussion of it among real estate agents. "There's no official legal disclosure, and we haven't seen inspectors bringing it up."

Crystal Lake Re/Max agent Kathy Stevens-Blasi agreed that she had heard little about the ash borer's encroachment until it came up twice recently with the same client, who was selling his home in northwest suburban Marengo.

The week before the closing, a home inspector pointed out that two ashes on the property appeared to be dying, she said.

"There was a medium-sized tree in the back, maybe 12 inches in diameter, and then there was a huge one in front, probably 48 inches in diameter," she said. Though the buyer didn't request their removal, the seller took them down at a cost of \$800.

Then came the inspection at the home the same seller was purchasing in another town nearby.

"The inspector pointed out one tree and said, 'It looks like you've got the same problem,'" the agent said.

The man chose not to make it an issue for the purchase and planned to hire a company to remove it professionally, she explained.

"The inspector said, 'You are too nice,'" she said.

Maybe so.

Removing mature trees can cost from a few hundred to thousands of dollars, depending on size, how many there are, and their proximity to the home, Corrigan said. Add to that the cost of planting replacement trees.

And, she said, once they're dead or clearly dying, ash trees need to be taken out sooner rather than later.

"They're heavy and brittle, and they become hazardous," Corrigan said.

"Other trees can stand dead for years, but ash trees will start to crack off and fall, and they become dangerous to people and to houses. That's why municipalities are scrambling to take down parkway (ashes). They're a liability."

Frank Lesh, executive director of the American Society of Home Inspectors in Des Plaines, said inspectors don't routinely check ash trees — or other trees, for that matter — to diagnose disease.

"If there are damaged trees, especially if they are near the house, where there are limbs that are dead and in danger of falling or there are branches that touch power lines, we bring that up," he said.

The relatively good news, Corrigan said, is that an annual, prescriptive treatment can be effective if begun early. "Someone who is certified can look at your tree and determine how much the canopy has thinned," one of the early signs of the ash borers' destructiveness. She said some experts say that even with a 50 percent dieback of the canopy, treatment can help the tree, though the arboretum puts that number at 30 percent.

Trouble is, the insects can be residing in the tree for years before their effects are obvious, Corrigan said. And the arboretum, which has extensive information on the insect at mortonarb.org, estimates millions of ash trees will die from the ash borer's obsessive munching.

Corrigan suggested that even if the ash borer isn't in home inspectors' repertoire, it should be.

"They should be taking a look, assessing the landscape," she said, adding that homeowners ought to check out what's in their yards, if only to protect their real estate assets.

Agents might want to add it to their arsenal of consumer advice, Kinney said.

"If I were in an area that was more populated with these trees, as an agent I'd be more proactive, pointing it out," he said. "If I were working with a buyer, I would be saying, 'Are you aware of these things?'"

And the insects' presence needn't induce real estate panic, Stevens-Blasi said. As with most other issues in a property transaction, solutions can be worked out.

"Everything is negotiable," she said. "When you compare the price (of treatment or tree removal) to the price of a house that you really want, is it something that's going to deter you from buying a house?"

INDIANA

You'll Never Believe The Creatures Invading Indiana

<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/local/2014/08/22/indiana-invasive-species/14448795/>

Ryan Sabalow, ryan.sabalow@indystar.com August 25, 2014

There's no two ways about it. Invasive species suck. Because they're non-native, they have few natural predators and can decimate ecosystems when they become established. And one particularly nasty species is practically knocking on Indiana's door.

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence declared next week Asian Longhorned Beetle Awareness Week.

These beetles kills trees by burrowing into them. They especially love maple trees, and that means bad news for Indiana's forests. Maple species make up a third or more of the trees in many Hoosier woods.



Female Asian longhorned beetle. (Photo: Star archive)

While the beetles haven't yet been found in Indiana, an infestation was discovered in Bethel, Ohio, just east of Cincinnati.

Pence and the Department of Natural Resources are urging Hoosiers to report longhorned beetle infestations by calling 1-866-NO EXOTIC. You can also download an app at EDDmaps.org/Indiana to submit bug reports on your phone.

Here are some of the other invasive species giving Indiana wildlife biologists heartburn.

Sea Lampreys:

Talk about nasty. These parasitic, blood-sucking fish feed by latching their nasty toothy suckery mouths onto other fish. While there's some debate about whether the fish were originally native to Lake Ontario, in the past 100 years, they've swarmed the Great Lakes, including Indiana's portion of Lake Michigan and the tributaries that feed the lake. That's bad for the fish and commercial anglers. Lampreys are blamed for the decline of several native species.

Asian carp:

There are two species of Asian carp, bigheads and silvers, that have invaded Indiana's rivers. Fisheries biologists hate these things because they threaten aquatic ecosystems, commercial fishing and, yes, people. Silver carp not only gobble up organisms vital to a waterway's food chain, but when they're disturbed by a boat, they're prone to leaping from the water, sometimes by the dozen, and often directly into the boat's path. A 40 pounder could bounce off your noggin on your next boat ride. Not good.

Wild hogs:

Yep, these reality TV stars live in isolated pockets in Southern Indiana. While not in the state in overwhelming numbers, wildlife biologists say they're worried that these prolific breeders may spread like they have in many other states. That's a particular concern for landowners, livestock operators and wildlife biologists, who say these terribly destructive animals wreak havoc on crops, landscaping and wild habitats. They also carry disease.

Invasive mussels:

Zebra and quagga mussels were likely introduced into the U.S. from Asia via the global shipping trade. These mussels can blanket lake and river bottoms and clog intake pipes for drinking water. Zebra mussels stick to any hard surface, including turtle shells and the bodies of crayfish. They also suck to step on barefoot. These mussels harm ecosystems by sucking up microscopic organisms at the bottom of the food chain and outcompeting native species. Zebra mussels have been found in waterways all over Indiana, and quagga mussels have invaded Lake Michigan.

Emerald ash borer:

The penny-sized green beetle is native to Asia. It was first discovered in the U.S. near Detroit about 10 years ago. It since has rapidly chewed its way through millions of native ash trees in much of the eastern half of the country, including in Indiana.

Mute swans:

Everybody loves swans, right? Nope. State waterfowl biologists wish these ugly ducklings would have never been hatched in Indiana. Native to Europe and Asia, these birds are bad news for native habitats. Each day they eat up to eight pounds of aquatic plants vital to the health of aquatic ecosystems. They're also extremely aggressive during the breeding season and readily attack ducks, geese, pets and even children.

Gypsy moths:

These are one of North America's most devastating invasive forest pests. Another European and Asian invader, they were introduced near Boston in the 1860s by an amateur entomologist, according to the DNR. Since then, gypsy moths, which chow down on oak trees, have spread into the Midwest, including in Indiana.

IOWA

Are your trees having issues?

[Are-your-trees-having-issues?](#)

By Alma Gaul Quad City Times (IA), August 24, 2014

Trees can have problems. Here are questions about issues affecting magnolia, hackberry and walnut trees, with answers from horticulturists at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Q: My magnolia is infested with magnolia scale. What are my control options?

Magnolia scale (*Neolecanium cornuparvum*) is the largest scale insect in the Midwest. Adult magnolia scale females are pinkish-orange to brown, elliptical and up to one-half inch in diameter. Females give birth to their young (known as nymphs or crawlers) in late summer.

Sap feeding by the scales causes stress to heavily infested plants and can result in stunted growth, yellowish foliage, branch dieback or death of the plant. Magnolia scales produce large quantities of honeydew (sugary excretion) that accumulate on the tree's leaves and twigs. Sooty mold, a black fungus that grows on honeydew, turns the honeydew-covered leaves and twigs black.

Magnolia scale is difficult to control. Two or more control strategies may need to be employed. Remove and destroy heavily infested branches. Spray infested trees with a contact insecticide (horticultural oil, insecticidal soap or synthetic insecticide) in late August to early September to control the crawler stage of the insect.

Another control option is a soil drench application of a systemic insecticide, such as imidacloprid, in July. Dormant horticultural oil also can be used in late fall or early spring before the buds begin to break.

Q: Why are the leaves on my hackberry turning brown and falling to the ground?

A: The browning is probably due to lace bugs, sap-feeding insects commonly found on the leaves of shade and ornamental trees in the Midwest. Trees most commonly affected are hackberry, sycamore and oak.

Adult lace bugs have attractive wings that are beautifully sculptured with an intricate pattern of veins resembling lace, hence the common name.



Alma Gaul. Eastern black walnuts are a beloved native tree, producing nuts with a bright green hull. At this time of year, they may have clumps of fall webworms at the end of their branches. The worms don't cause serious damage to healthy trees, though, so controls are not necessary.

Lace bugs feed on the underside of leaves. They pierce the leaf epidermis with their sucking mouth parts and cause the characteristic pale yellow, scorched or “bleached” discoloration on the upper leaf surfaces. The underside of heavily infested leaves will be speckled with small, black, shiny “varnish spots” (excrement).

While lace bugs are present throughout the summer, damage symptoms usually don’t develop until August or September, and there isn’t much that needs to be done about them.

Lace bug damage varies greatly from year to year, mainly in response to variations in natural controls and weather conditions. Severe feeding may cause premature leaf drop, but healthy, well-established trees are not seriously harmed.

Spraying infested trees with an insecticide in late summer is of little or no benefit to the trees. Further, spraying when it is too late for effective control may cause more harm than good by killing the insect’s natural enemies.

Q: There are big, hairy worms and tent-like structures in my walnut tree. What are they and how do I get rid of them?

A: The “worms” are likely fall webworms, hairy, tan to yellow caterpillars. As they feed, they construct tents or webs at the ends of branches. Tents are initially small, but the caterpillars enlarge the tents as they grow and consume the leaves within the tents.

By the end of summer, tents may be 2 to 3 feet long and enclose entire ends of branches. Fall webworms feed on more than 200 species of deciduous trees. However, walnuts are their favorite host. In the Midwest, the first sightings of fall webworms usually occur in early to mid-August.

Fall webworms do not cause serious damage to healthy, well-established trees. As a result, controls are not necessary. Damage to trees can be minimized by undertaking control measures as soon as the tents are discovered. Tents on branches that can be safely reached from the ground or with a ladder can be pruned out and the caterpillars destroyed.

Insecticides also can be used for control, but they must be applied with sufficient pressure to penetrate the tent and reach the caterpillars inside. Insecticide applications after mid-September are of no benefit and should be avoided in order to preserve predators, parasites and other biological control organisms.

Riverine walk offers lesson in watershed restoration

[Riverine-walk-offers-lesson-in-watershed-restoration](#)

Steve Trainor Quad City Times (IA), August 23, 2014 6:44 pm

An upclose lesson in environmental restoration was presented on Saturday during one of the Riverine walks sponsored by River Action.

Saturday's walk was just south of Moline's Green Valley Sports complex, off 52nd Avenue at 60th Street and just north of I-280. A small group of citizens were educated about this watershed area called the Green Valley Nature Preserve, consisting mainly of a wide pond, 2 to 3 feet deep, hidden from the avenue by high foliage.

"There's been a lot of work to redirect or clean the run-off water coming from the upper bluffs residential areas and commercial grounds on the south side of John Deere Road, here," explained Mik Holgersson, an environmental consultant.

The four-year-old EPA-funded project, costing \$200,000-plus, is restoring a 225-acre wetland in Moline and eventually improving Rock River water quality.

It helps that Holgersson's degree in conservation and biology is backed by his extensive knowledge of herpetology: the study of frogs and reptiles.

"We're intercepting the run-off before it gets to the Rock River to work it back into the wetland and allow the wetland to do its biological process to purify it and let the water get back in the ground more slowly," he added.

So Holgersson is working to not only increase the vegetation that filters and offers a more diverse food source for wildlife, but also remove invasive plants like Reed canary grass. With more projects like this, absorbing and slowing the water, it could hopefully taper the amount of flooding.

An added bonus is improving the wildlife habitat he noted, as a flock of geese flew overhead and into a landing on the pond. After that, he expects recreational opportunities of walking trails, offering more access.

Paul Levesque lives nearby, bicycling early in the morning, discovering a part of the Quad-Cities most don't know about.

"That's why I wanted to take this walk, to learn more," he said, "but I know this wetland is important to our quality of life, as it draws a bigger variety of wildlife, and people would be amazed to see it all so close."

He and the others agreed that with more people driving down 52nd Avenue to see this burgeoning wetland, there is less vandalism and fewer ATV drivers.

Cliff Scharer and his wife Marge enjoy the different River Action walks and were at this one a year ago. They say there's been a big change.

“Last year it was very dry and now these weeds are five feet high,” Cliff said as he maneuvered his way down the uneven swath of path Holgersson had mowed with a tractor.

For more information about these walks or how you can help, go to riveraction.org or call 563-322-2969.

MINNESOTA

MnDOT to Cut Down Infected Ash Trees

[Mndot-to-cut-down-infected-ash-trees](#)

Post-Bulletin (MN), Friday, August 22, 2014 11:01 am

STEWARTVILLE — The Minnesota Department of Transportation in October will remove ash trees that have been infected with emerald ash borer disease from the area around the intersection of Interstate 90 and U.S. 63 north of Stewartville, it announced.

The infestation was found recently and adds Olmsted County to Houston, Winona, Ramsey and Hennepin on the list of counties to have trees with the disease. When trees are cut down, they will be disposed of properly.

The crews will also look for more signs of the disease that was found in trees growing along a fence.

Because of this find, Olmsted County will join Hennepin, Houston, Ramsey and Winona counties in a state and federal quarantine. The quarantine is in place to help prevent EAB from spreading outside a known infested area into new areas. It is designed to limit the movement of any items that may be infested with EAB, including ash trees and ash tree limbs, as well as all hardwood firewood.

The EAB is not very active at this time of year, so MnDOT will be organizing work crews to remove and properly dispose of the trees in October. At that time, crews will also do more work to determine the scope of the EAB infestation. Dead trees were evident along the MnDOT right of way fence line.

Emerald ash borer larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree's nutrients. Since its accidental introduction into North America, EAB has killed tens of millions of ash trees.

WISCONSIN

Proper Tree Choice Key When Replanting After Emerald Ash Borer

[Proper-tree-choice-key-replanting-emerald-ash-borer](#)

Fon Du Lac Reporter (WI), August 22, 2014

Now is the time to make an important choice about trees for communities and homeowners.

Many communities are proactively removing ash trees because of the emerald ash borer (EAB). This insect attacks and kills ash trees. Alliant Energy's crews are often part of the effort to safely remove ash trees near power lines.



EMERALD ash borer. (Photo: Gannett Wisconsin Media File Photo)

Because of EAB, Alliant Energy takes special precautions with ash trees. Alliant follows the guidelines that prohibit moving trees out of a quarantined county. In special cases, Alliant Energy finely shreds the trees to required standards to eliminate any larvae.

After a tree is removed, Alliant encourages careful planning so customers can get maximum energy-savings benefits from replacement trees, while also reducing outages and the need for extensive tree trimming.

Historically, communities planted ash trees along roads because they grew fast and looked nice. However, these trees often contact power lines and cause an outage. To prevent outages, Alliant Energy crews must do routine tree trimming.

"Certain types of trees work really well in a given location," said Dan Green, arborist and manager of tree trimming for Alliant. "You shouldn't plant a tree that will grow tall if there are power lines above it."

When replanting after EAB, several factors should be considered. If the tree will go near power lines, use a species that doesn't grow tall. If the tree is designed to provide shade and energy efficiency, it should be planted where there is a lot of room to grow.

Information about the many species of trees that work well in all locations, including under power lines, is available at alliantenergy.com/treetrimming.