

Alberta's Elm Pruning Ban starts April 1st

by Janet Feddes-Calpas

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To help keep Alberta Dutch elm disease (DED) free, there is a provincial elm pruning ban in place between April 1st and September 30th. Stored elm firewood can be harboring the elm bark beetles that carry DED. It is important to properly dispose of all pruned elm wood and elm firewood by burning, burying or chipping by March 31st.

Elm bark beetles, responsible for spreading the deadly DED fungus, feed on healthy elms and breed in dead and dying elm trees. If elm trees are pruned during the pruning ban period, these beetles which are active at this time can be attracted to the scent of the fresh wound and possibly infect your otherwise healthy elm with DED. Once an elm tree is infected with DED it will die within that year.

Having your tree pruned properly is important. Many trees are killed or ruined annually from improper pruning. Pruning like any other skill requires knowledge and should be done by a professional certified arborist who can determine what type of pruning is necessary to maintain or improve the health, appearance and safety of your trees.

Topping or removing an excessive amount of live wood is not recommended on any variety of trees and will weaken the tree's structure. For more information on pruning, certified ISA arborists and DED visit either <http://www.isaprairie.com/> or www.stoppeded.org.