

## ELM BARK BEETLE



*European Elm Bark Beetle*  
Photo Credit: Gerald J. Lenhard

### DESCRIPTION

Adults are brownish-black in colour. They measure approximately 1/8" (2–3.5 mm.), with the long body covered with short, stiff, yellow hairs. The wings are deeply pitted. These pests are especially bad as they are the vector for Dutch Elm Disease. The eggs are laid in bark wounds found on elm trunks, and the larvae burrow down to the cambium layer, which may cause girdling of the tree. Elm Bark Beetles are most likely to attack trees that have been weakened by drought, new pruning cuts, insects, and disease. A good maintenance program will greatly reduce the chances of infestation. This program includes keeping trees watered and organically fertilized.

Trees have heavy nitrogen needs, so use a high-nitrogen fertilizer such as blood meal or cottonseed meal. Only prune dead, dying, or injured branches before April 1<sup>st</sup> or after July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Dutch Elm Disease control is a community problem. The wider the area over which controls are carried out, the better the results will be. Once an elm tree is infected with the disease, it never recovers. Therefore, as soon as infection is discovered, control methods must be promptly applied to keep the disease from spreading in a community. It is imperative to completely destroy all debris from diseased elms.

The danger of infestation is less common for young, vigorous trees than for older American elms. The most noticeable symptom of Dutch Elm Disease is the wilting and yellowing of one or more branches of infected trees. The leaves do not fall off the elm branch and turn brown as the disease pronounces. The leaves are still soft and do not dry out.

### CONTROL

Basal spraying can be applied to the bottom 50 cm of affected trees with a product registered for eradicating the beetles, or the trees can be injected with a systemic fungicide. The chemical is injected into small holes drilled in the trunk and is carried upward to the crown by the flow of the sap. There are products that can be injected in high value or visible elms to assist in protecting elm trees. Do not move, transport, or store elm wood.