

Cottony Ash Psyllid in Saskatoon

Cottony ash psyllid (psyllid) is a non-native pest that is impacting Black and Mancana Ash trees throughout the city. Stressed trees are particularly susceptible to this pest and the combination of dry conditions and an insect infestation can eventually lead to tree loss.

Signs of cottony ash psyllid

Psyllids are very small (2.95-3.57 mm), light green to yellow-green pests. Because of their size, the presence of psyllids is most easily recognized by the damage they create:

- White cotton curled within the leaflet margins and rolled under and towards the midrib.
- White cotton along the midrib of an uncurled leaf is a sign of second generation psyllids.
- Heavily infested trees will often be partially defoliated with the remaining leaves twisted into a corkscrew or cauliflower shape.

Susceptible trees include Black Ash (*fraxinus nigra*) and the cultivar 'Fallgold', Manchurian Ash (*fraxinus mandshurica*) and the cultivar 'Mancana', and 'Northern Treasure' and 'Northern Gem' which are a cross between Black Ash and Manchurian Ash.

Green Ash, White Ash, and Mountainash (a different species) are not impacted.

How prevalent is the cottony ash psyllid in Saskatoon?

The first outbreak of psyllids in Saskatoon was in 2006, which was followed by a crash in the population. In 2016, large numbers of psyllids were discovered in trees planted within concrete cut-outs in our central business districts and the surrounding neighbourhoods. A recent city wide canopy inspection has found that most susceptible trees have some level of infestation. In addition to the central business district, the neighbourhoods that have been most affected by this recent outbreak include Riversdale, Nutana, Silverspring and City Park.

What is the City doing in response to this outbreak?

Insecticide injections were completed on selected trees in May 2017 in an attempt to reduce the infestation. Data is currently being collected to determine whether injections may be an effective treatment.

The City does not know the extent of loss or damage that will result from this psyllid infestation. So far, the action plan includes:

- Removing and replacing (with a different tree species) more than 100 trees in the central business improvement districts and along 22nd Street.
- Conducting a canopy inspection of susceptible trees in July and August to assess the impact of the psyllid outbreak city wide.
- Trees assessed for removal during the canopy inspection will be removed and replaced as resources permit.

What can you do to help?

Trees under stress are more susceptible to insect infestations. **The best approach to keep your tree(s) healthy and less vulnerable to insect infestations is to water between rainfalls, protect your trees from root or trunk damage, and avoid the use of herbicides or excessive salts in the soils near trees.** The City does not recommend chemical treatments; however, homeowners can speak to a certified arborist or a local garden centre if they would like to know more about treatment options.

Finally, please be patient. This is an emerging pest issue and we do not have all the answers yet. Updates on the overall impact and response efforts will be communicated to the public as information becomes available.



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