

Cottony Ash Psyllid in Saskatoon

Cottony ash psyllid is a non-native 2.95-3.57 mm light green to yellow-green pest that was first identified in Saskatoon in 2006 on Black and Mancana Ash. This insect is native to central Europe but has made several appearances in North America including recent infestations in North Dakota, Minnesota and Alberta.

To date there is limited information on the biology of the cottony ash psyllid. Stressed trees, especially those found in concrete cut-outs in Saskatoon's downtown area, have been particularly susceptible.

Signs of cottony ash psyllid

Because of their size, the presence of cottony ash psyllids are 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 Mountain Ash (a different species) are not impacted.

How prevalent is the cottony ash psyllid in Saskatoon?

The first outbreak of cottony ash psyllid 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. Most susceptible trees have some level of infestation.

What is the City doing in response?

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

The City does not know the extent of the 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 to assess the impact of the psyllid outbreak city wide.
- Trees assessed for removal during the canopy inspection will be removed as resources permit.

What can you do to help us?

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 emerging response efforts will be communicated to the public as information becomes available.



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