

Town looks to implement strategy to fight emerald ash borer

By Kim Arnott
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

While dead ash trees will undoubtedly be a common sight in Milton in years to come, a Town strategy has been proposed to save some of the largest and healthiest of the trees from an Asian beetle that's decimating the population.

The multi-year strategy, outlined to a com-

mittee of Milton councillors last week, would see about 860 ash street trees given TreeAzin injections to protect them from the emerald ash borer.

While treating all of the estimated 4,000 ash street trees with the \$200 per dose insecticide was seen as too expensive for the Town, the alternative of letting all of the trees simply die was deemed to be likely unacceptable to residents, said Paul Cripps, the Town's

director of engineering services.

Describing the strategy as a "blended response to the issue," Cripps said the TreeAzin injections would be given to trees with trunks that are eight inches in diameter at chest height, and were deemed to be in good or excellent condition in a 2011 ash tree inventory. According to the inventory, about half of the ash street trees are in "old" Milton, including the majority of the largest trees. The other half of the trees are in the Bristol Survey, with most of those trees smaller than the treatment size. Ash trees haven't been planted on streets or in parks since 2007.

Treatment of the identified trees every two years is expected to save roughly 21 per cent of the Town's inventory of ash street trees.

Cripps suggested if an additional 10 per cent of trees manage to survive the emerald ash borer infestation on their own, the combined result could be the survival of nearly one-third of the street trees.

However, he emphasized that ongoing TreeAzin treatment would be required every two years until the threat of infestation passes, which might take years or never completely occur.

The strategy budgets \$200,000 in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020 to cover the cost of treating

the trees.

Untreated trees would be removed and replaced as they die, at a cost of about \$800 each. The Town is budgeting about \$3 million between 2014 and 2020 for removal and replacement of trees.

The strategy, which has been referred to the 2014 budget process for consideration, addresses only Town-owned street trees, and not trees on private property, although they are equally susceptible to the infestation.

Cripps suggested a communications strategy would be required to explain the strategy to residents, as well as communicate information on how they should manage trees on their properties.

With the beetle devastating ash trees across North America, efforts have been made to find a natural predator to control its spread.

Two tiny Chinese wasps were recently approved for release by the Canada Food Inspection Agency.

The parasitic wasps, which are said to be hardly large enough to see, don't sting humans but kill beetles and other insects when they lay their eggs inside them.

Early tests in Michigan appear to be showing success in introducing them into the emerald ash borer population.



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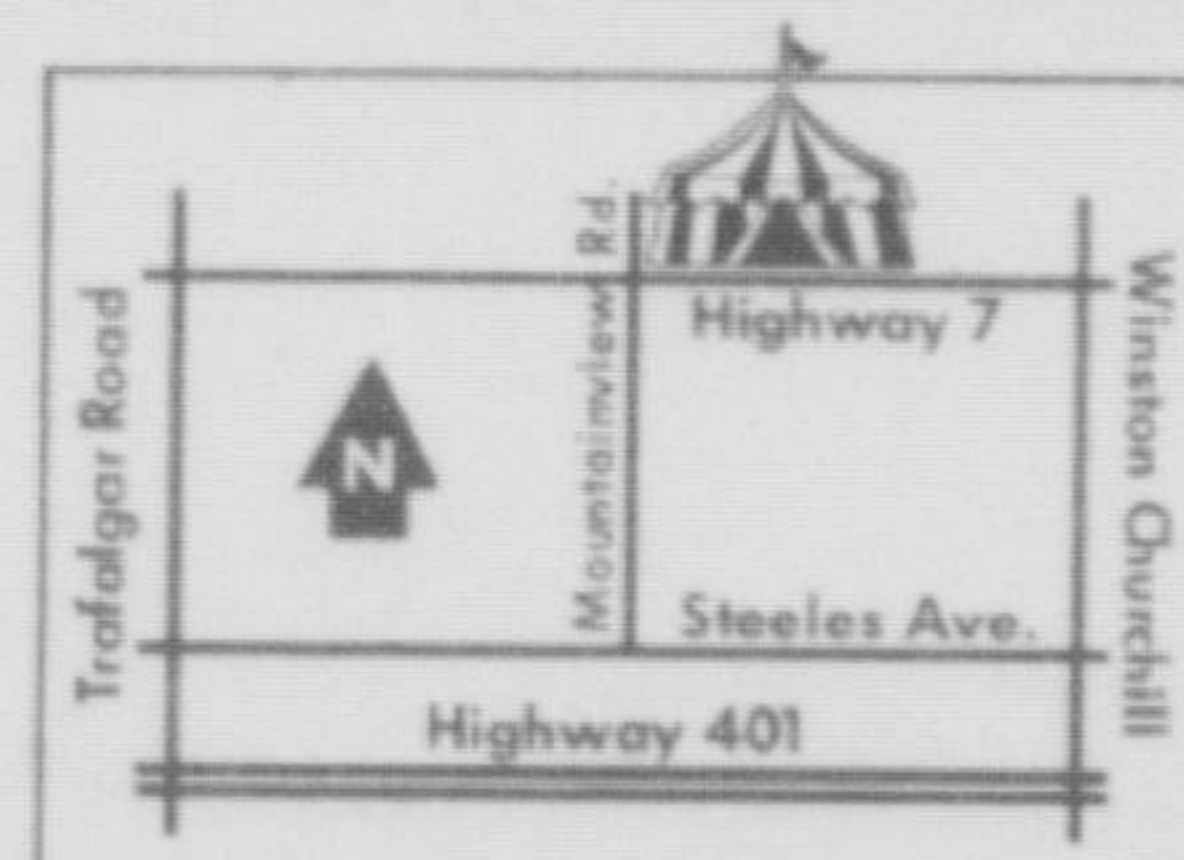
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