

Ask An Arborist™ Quick Reference: Dutch Elm Disease

Remember the Elm Tree? Dutch Elm Disease

Dutch elm disease is considered one of the most devastating shade tree diseases ever. It is caused by the fungus *Ophiostoma ulmi*; an aggressive, lethal fungus that does not discriminate between healthy and stressed trees.

The first noticeable symptom of Dutch elm disease is when leaves on one or more branches turn yellow, wilt, and fall from the tree (fig. 1). As the infection progresses, the wood beneath the bark becomes discolored (fig. 2). Most infected elms cannot be saved -- therefore proactive measures must be taken to prevent the spread of the disease. Dutch elm disease is transmitted by the elm bark beetle (fig. 3) or via root grafts between elm trees growing in close proximity to one another. Because of the elm bark beetle's habits, one should avoid pruning elm trees during the growing season.

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1. first sign of an infection
2. streaking caused by the fungus
3. adult elm bark beetle