

Deciduous Tree Threats

[LDD Spongy Moth](#) (previously Gypsy Moth) – the caterpillars drop nasty stuff on you so you can't enjoy your yard while they eat all the leaves. For most trees it's not life-threatening but they can defoliate large trees, esp oaks, so badly they will weaken and die.

- Take action – look for egg masses and remove them! [Learn More](#)

[Dutch Elm Disease](#) - the most devastating disease of elm trees in North America. Beetles carry the fungus which kills the tree. Signs include leaves wilting, curling, and turning yellow. Eventually, no leaves will be left.

- Early detection is key. Don't prune during the growing season from April to October. In most cases, it's best to contact 311 or a professional to help with pruning and treating the tree with a fungicide.

[Emerald Ash Borer](#) – they kill most ash trees within a very short timeframe and then move on, steadily deforesting vast areas of Ontario. One of the worst pests ever! Very limited ways to fight back.

[Oak Wilt](#) – this kills! Symptoms include leaves turning yellow-bronzy colour and early leaf drop (July to August). Eventually, no leaves will be left on the tree. Fungal mats also cause bark to split.

- Report potential sightings of Oak wilt symptoms to 3-1-1. Refrain from pruning oak trees during the growing season (early May-late September) to avoid attracting sap feeding beetles that transmit the disease. Do not move firewood! Prevent the spread of infected material.

[Beech Bark Disease](#) - devastating disease of beech trees caused by the combination of a beech bark scale, an insect, and a type of fungi. The beech bark scale weakens the tree by making wounds in the tree, and the fungus gets into these wounds, spreads and kills the tree.

- Signs of scales: white woolly wax where the bark is rough and can cover the whole tree.
- Signs of fungus: discolouration of the white wax produced by the scales, brown slime oozing from the tree, leaves don't reach their full size but turn yellow and brown and don't fall.
- Once the fungus infects the tree, there is nothing to do but remove the tree.

Evergreen Tree Threats

[Cytospora Canker](#) – this is one of the most common and damaging diseases of spruce. It is caused by a fungus and usually infects trees that are already weak and have wounds in the bark.

- Needles turn purple, then brown and fall off, leaving the infected branches bare and usually covered with white resin. The fungus shows itself with black, pinhead-sized fruiting bodies.
- There is no chemical control for this disease. Avoid injuring the tree. Water trees during a dry period. Prune and remove affected branches back to the main stem. Prune only when it is dry. Disinfect pruning tools with rubbing alcohol between each cut.

[Rhizosphaera Needle Cast](#) – commonly just called 'Needle Cast'. Our Colorado blue spruce are very prone to this and it takes just a few short years for the tree to lose most of its internal needles and only have a few bits of life left on the tips. Nurse it along as much as you can by keeping it well-watered and mulched. If possible, give it lots of space from other plantings to open it up to airflow. There is no approved chemical treatment in Ontario. I still love them and have one gradually losing its needles in my backyard but I would be hesitant about planting this species as a focal point in a front yard!