

January 11, 2024 **URGENT**

Hello, neighbor. We're contacting property owners to advise and involve you in an important matter affecting our beloved Country Estates (CE). If you've lived here a while, you know that the Oak Wilt disease has existed in our area for decades. The neighborhood has intervened three times in hopes of containing or at least slowing down its spread. Trenching was done in 1994, 2005, and 2016. However, the disease has now extended beyond those old barriers and is affecting additional properties.

As background, Oak Wilt is a fungal disease which can potentially affect any species of Oak tree. It tends to spread from infected trees to nearby healthy trees through interconnected root systems. Because our properties are heavily-treed, and we have a disproportionate number of Oaks, the disease has the potential to devastate our forest over time. For example, one CE homeowner has already lost all of his larger, beautiful Oaks.

Once trees are infected with Oak Wilt, they're weakened and subject to decline and/or death. There is NO CURE. The best scenario is to manage areas with infected trees and do our best to slow or stop the spread to new groups of trees. The Texas A&M Forest Service has an extensive amount of information about Oak Wilt for your reference:

<https://texasoakwilt.org/oakwilt>.

This week a number of CE property owners met to discuss a plan of action in coordination with the Forest Service. We will seek to identify the known disease areas and newly affected areas in CE. A fourth trenching project will be considered. To address these issues, it's important for CE property owners to stay in communication. Will you please share your best **contact name, street address, phone number, and email address?** Our updates will be sent by email going forward. We will be sure to maintain your privacy in using these records.

EMAIL US TODAY WITH YOUR INFORMATION: country.estates.trees@gmail.com.

Would you also indicate in your email if the Forest Service agent would have permission to enter your property to look at your trees? This inspection would occur on the date the agent schedules with us. We will communicate further about this.

Time is of the essence in moving to the next steps. Because our oaks naturally lose their leaves in late February and early March, the Forest Service agent will meet on-site with several of us in the next week or two – to walk some of the properties that may be affected. A plan for addressing the spread will be discussed including possible trenching.

If you think you may have oak wilt on your property, you may also want to seek advice directly from the Texas Forest Service or a certified arborist.

Committee members:

Susan Smith & Bill Ricker, Rhonda White, Troy Belver, Jon Ogden (Certified Arborist TX0111), Molly McDonald-Ogden, Danny Dever, Libby & Gary Loyd, Glen Rydl.

Thank you!!

****We've included Backus Estates in the delivery of this letter because of your proximity to the neighborhood. If you would like to receive further communication, please send us your contact info above. Many thanks!**