

LOCAL NEWS

Long Beach officials on the lookout for solutions to 1,000+ magnolia tree infestations

Many trees are likely infested with tuliptree scales. Long Beach officials first noticed the issue a few years ago and tried to manage it. The infestation has since grown citywide.



Long Beach can be called an urban forest with trees on every street. This is a Magnolia Tree on Magnolia Avenue in Long Beach. Long Beach May 17, 2016. (Photo by Brittany Murray / SCNG)

By [HAYLEY MUNGUIA](mailto:hmunguia@scng.com) | hmunguia@scng.com | Long Beach

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Long Beach knows that sick magnolia trees are a big problem in the city – so officials are looking for solutions.

The City Council voted unanimously at its Tuesday, Oct. 8 meeting to direct staff to compile a report within 90 days that includes how Long Beach can improve its current processes surrounding tree infestations – as well as a cost estimate for the removal and replanting of all of the city’s affected magnolia trees.

The action was spurred by the fact that more than 1,000 of Long Beach’s 7,000 magnolia trees are likely infested with tuliptree scales – a type of pest that favors plants in the magnolia family.

The insects thrive on young trees or trees that are in distress due to environmental factors like a lack of water, and they can often wind up killing the trees.

A symptom that many folks in Long Beach have witnessed is the secretion of a sticky, black substance that coats lawns, sidewalks and cars.

Long Beach officials first noticed the issue a few years ago and tried to manage the problem, with little success. The infestation has since grown citywide.

Although City Council members said Tuesday night that they hope they won’t have to chop down many trees in the management process, it’s a distinct possibility.

“Cutting the trees is our last resort,” said Councilman Roberto Uranga, who brought the item to the panel. “However, we understand that that might need to happen, because some will be so far gone that we can’t salvage them.”

While the city works to figure out the best solutions, Uranga said Long Beach is looking to gather as much data as possible.

“I encourage anyone who has a magnolia tree in front of their house that they think might be sick,” he said, “please contact our office. Call us, or call the City Manager’s office.”

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