



### Precautionary Destruction

► ELM TREES have long been favorites with the people of this country. Elms are beautiful in themselves, especially the American or white elm, with its long, sweeping, arch-forming branches. We think, too, of the picture of George Washington accepting his commission as commander of the Continental forces under the great elm in Cambridge, Mass., and of other elms that have backgrounded memorable scenes in our history.

Yet in the face of this comes a recommendation from the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U. S. Department of Agriculture, that farmers and other owners of mixed hardwood

timber should concentrate their attention on the elms in them, especially if these trees show any signs of being sick, and cut them down and use the wood as quickly as possible. At first blush, it seems downright unpatriotic to make such a demand.

There is good practical reason, however, for this move. American elms are threatened by two serious scourges, the well-known though misnamed Dutch elm disease and a less-advertised though probably equally dangerous malady known only by its technical title, phloem necrosis. Either disease is almost inevitably fatal to an elm if it gets a firm hold on the tree: the only thing to do with a tree in which the infection has become established is to cut it down and burn it, to prevent it from spreading the disease to trees still unattacked.

Squads of disease-fighters have been doing this for several years in the areas where these diseases are most threatening. During the war this work has been seriously handicapped by the manpower shortage, so it has not been possible to extend the street and highway patrols out into the woods. Yet elms in the woods are just as likely to become diseased as those in the open, and much less likely to be detected while they are in the dangerously infective stage. It is for this reason that the prompt felling and utilization of any timber-lot elm that shows wilting or dead foliage is now recommended.

The recommendation even goes beyond the destruction of trees known to be diseased. It is suggested, in view of the present shortages of timber and firewood, that elms be cut before other trees. Elm has never been much esteemed as lumber, but it can yield posts and other rough timbers, where sawing or splitting is not required. Such elm logs as are cut for these purposes during the warm months should have their bark removed and burned, to kill off the disease-causing fungi and the bark beetles that serve as carriers for the infection.

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