

RESTORATION IN PROGRESS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Monmouth County Park System is working to restore a forest impacted with Beech Leaf Disease (BLD). BLD is an emerging disease associated with an introduced nematode (*Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*) that impacts trees in the Beech genus, including our native American Beech (*Fagus grandiflora*). The disease was first detected in the Monmouth County Park System in 2022 and has since been recorded in almost every park with an American Beech component. Symptoms of the disease include dark banding on the foliage, curling and thickening of leaves, pre-mature leaf shedding, bud death, and branch dieback. The disease is deadly to the tree, with the impact being most evident to the saplings, killing them in as few as 2-5 years.



Diagnostic striping and discoloration caused by Beech Leaf Disease



Volunteers securing a protective tube over a planted tree

REASON FOR PROJECT

Though research is ongoing, there are no available treatments for a forest infected with BLD. The forests along the Beech Glen Trail are, as the name implies, largely dominated by American Beech and the disease has progressed rapidly in this area. To mitigate the anticipated loss of American Beech, Park System staff initiated a reforestation project at the recommendation of forestry professionals. Trees were planted with protective tubes to prevent deer browse as the young trees establish. Several species of native trees were planted on site including mockernut hickory (*Carya tomentosa*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), and a variety of oak species (*Quercus spp.*). The diversity of tree species planted makes the forests of Holmdel Park more resistant to pests and diseases in the future.