

EMERALD ASH BORER

NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK 2017



MARCH 1, 2017

Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire, is an exotic beetle that was discovered in southeastern Michigan near Detroit in the summer of 2002. The adult beetles nibble on ash foliage but cause little damage. The larvae (the immature stage) feed on the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Emerald ash borer probably arrived in the United States on solid wood packing material carried in cargo ships or airplanes originating in its native Asia.

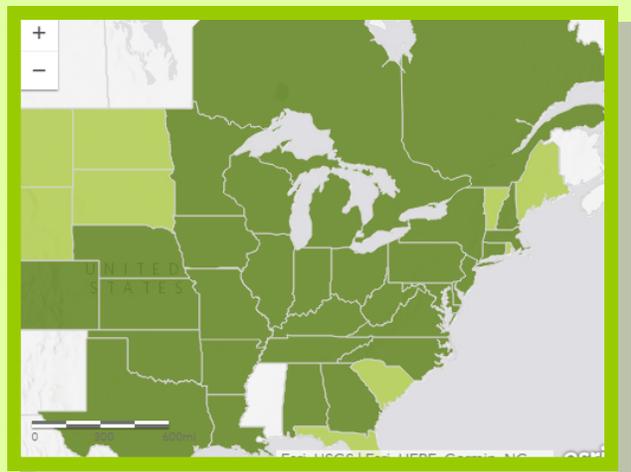
Since EAB was discovered 15 years ago in southeastern Michigan, it has quickly spread throughout many northeast and mid-west states. Ash is a common forest tree in many areas with mature infestations – i.e.. the Great Lakes states – and stands there are easily recognized. Because the trees are all dead.

Once established, Emerald ash borer (EAB) will spread quickly and infest all ash trees in a city or community. With no control measures taken, a city can expect all ash trees to die within 6-10 years. For a city or community that is responsible for maintaining street, park or other trees, this presents a huge financial liability. For example, Fort Wayne, IN first discovered EAB in 2006 and had to remove 9,000 trees between 2011 and 2012. Fort Wayne reported not only financial hardship, but the massive tree removal exceeded what local arborists could handle. In addition to the costs, EAB threatens city tree canopy cover which affects the value of property and parks.

Given this reality, cities and communities must plan their response to EAB to limit sudden financial costs by spreading control costs over several years. Two methods are used which work together. Begin removing ash trees early to reduce inventory and apply chemical treatments to some trees to prevent infestation. Tree replacement and canopy cover is important for many communities. Trees selected for replanting should be diverse to avoid future pest problems that may impact other species. Beginning to replant trees today can help reduce the canopy loss that EAB will cause.

In August 2016, Delaware became the 28th state with a confirmed EAB presence. Although the impact is expected to be minimal due to a decade's-worth of preparation, Delaware was added to the federal quarantine list, which includes the other 29 affected states (OK and AL were added after DE). This quarantine restricts the interstate shipment of all ash wood and wood products (ash nursery stock, green lumber, waste, compost and chips, as well as hardwood firewood of all species) from quarantined states to non-quarantined states.

If you have questions, have a declining ash tree, or believe you've seen EAB – contact Stephen Hauss at the Delaware Department of Agriculture. 302-698-4586 or Stephen.Hauss@state.de.us



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