Frequently Asked Questions about Emerald Ash Borer

Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Program

There are 11 Wisconsin counties under Quarantine for EAB as of May 2010. They are: Brown, Crawford, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Vernon, Washington, and Waukesha.

Where did the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) come from? It is native to Asia and is found in China, Korea, and Russia.

When was EAB first discovered in North America? EAB was first identified in southeast Michigan in 2002. It likely arrived several years earlier.

How did it get to North America? It most likely arrived accidentally in ash wood used for stabilizing cargo in ships or used for wood pallets.

Where is EAB now? As of January 2010, EAB has been found in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Canada (Quebec and Ontario), Illinois, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Kentucky, and Wisconsin.

What does EAB look like? The adult beetle is dark metallic green, bullet-shaped and about one-half inch long.

How does EAB spread? EAB moves short distances by flying. Longer distances are reached through movement of infested ash products, including firewood, nursery stock and timber.

How does EAB harm ash trees? The larval stage of EAB feeds under the bark of trees, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients. Infested trees gradually die over a 2-4 year period.

Which trees are susceptible? All sizes and even very healthy ash trees can be killed. All of Wisconsin's native ash trees (green, white, black and blue) as well as many horticultural varieties are susceptible to EAB infestation.

How important are ash trees to Wisconsin? There are more than 765 million ash trees scattered throughout Wisconsin's forests. Ash is also a very common street tree, averaging 20 percent of street trees in Wisconsin.

What is being done nationally about EAB? There is a national effort to limit the spread and impact of EAB. The national plan guides management options for federal, state and local officials.

What has been done in Wisconsin? The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection with key partners including the Department of Natural Resources, the USDA Forest Service, USDA APHIS, The University of Wisconsin and UW Extension have been preparing for EAB since 2004. Surveys and public outreach have been used in an effort to locate EAB in the state, and firewood restrictions have been in place to help prevent its introduction or minimize the spread.

What will Wisconsin do now that EAB has been found? State and federal partners have created a response plan based on the most current research available. Our first steps are to determine the extent of the infestations. Quarantines will be used to limit the movement of firewood, nursery stock and ash logs so these items are not moved out of the infested area.

Will my ash trees be cut down as part of the state's response to EAB? Under the state's updated EAB response plan, there are a variety of potential management options depending upon the level of infestation. The decision to remove trees is one that must be carefully considered, and a decision on how to proceed will not be made until a thorough study of the infested area is complete. If it is found that the infestation is widespread and has been in the area for several years, it's unlikely that a widespread tree removal approach would be undertaken. Conversely, if an infestation is very small and confined, taking down the ash trees in the area may offer the greatest likelihood of wiping out that pocket of infestation. EAB management decisions involving the removal of all ash trees in a prescribed area are now much less common than they were a few years ago.

Is there anything I can do now to protect the ash trees in my yard from EAB? There are chemical treatments available to protect ash trees from EAB, but many need to be applied every year and none are 100 percent effective. The University of Wisconsin has information on these products.

If I have ash in my woodlot, should I be doing anything? During regularly scheduled harvest activities, consider maintaining ash at no more than 5-10 trees per acre or at the minimum basal area allowable by your forest management plan. If your land is within 15 miles of an infested area, consider contacting a professional forester to discuss your options.

Is ash still a viable choice when considering what to plant in my yard? In general, having a diversity of species in your yard, on your street or in your community is your best defense against all tree health problems. If ash comprises 10 percent or more of the tree species in your local area, it would be best to choose an alternative.

What can I do to help? Do not move firewood. Purchase or cut all firewood from the same general location where you plan to use it. When camping or at a cabin, do not take any leftover firewood home with you.

What else can I do? Educate yourself on how to recognize signs and symptoms of EAB. Information may be found at www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov. You may also report possible sightings of EAB by calling 1-800-462-2803.

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