

Remove or Treat Ash Trees Today

Prevent costly problems tomorrow

By Rosa Yoo, Forest Health Coordinator, New Jersey Forest Service

It may be hard to believe that a tiny green insect can wreak havoc on an entire tree species, but it is happening in 30 states nationwide, including right here in New Jersey. The emerald ash borer (EAB) has the potential to kill as many as 99% of the ash trees in the Garden State. That includes ash in forests, along streets, around homes, in parks, and along edges of fields. That is why anyone who has even one ash tree on their property or manages properties with ash trees should protect against the EAB now, even if a formal detection has not been made in their jurisdiction.

What is EAB?

This metallic green insect measures about 1/2 inch in length. For such a small creature, it can do enormous damage. An infestation of EABs can kill ash trees in as little as three to four years. The beetle's larvae feed on the inner layer of the bark, which effectively girdles the tree, eliminating its ability to move water and nutrients from the roots to the leaves, eventually killing the tree.

EAB is a non-native, invasive insect that was first detected in North America in Michigan in 2002. In 2014, EAB was detected in New Jersey, and has since been found in 12 counties and 52 municipalities, with new detections constantly appearing.

Treat ash trees

It is not too early to start pesticide treatments to protect ash from EAB infestation. Pesticide treatments are effective in protecting individual ash trees from EAB infestation. However, ash trees selected for treatment should be relatively healthy, as most pesticide treatments are taken up by the cambium, the tree's vascular system.



Ash trees with low levels of EAB infestation can be still be protected via pesticide treatments if done early enough and with appropriate pesticides. Pesticide treatments should be performed by a licensed certified pesticide applicator, and continue for at least 10 to 15 years.

Remove ash trees

It's also not too early to start removing any ash trees that you do not plan to treat. Begin this work sooner than later, and spread the work out over multiple years, which will make this otherwise daunting task more manageable.

Unfortunately, soon after an ash tree dies, the wood becomes brittle and prone to failure. Dead ash trees can pose a serious threat to people and property from falling branches. For this reason, be sure to remove ash trees in high-use areas, within striking distance of homes, yards, driveways, and buildings.

It is safer to cut and remove live ash trees than dead ash trees. Do not wait until ash are dead to start removals.

For More Information

Ash Trees



Tree damage inflicted by the Emerald Ash Borer.

- Visit emeraldashborer.nj.gov for:
- A sample EAB Action Plan
 - List of pesticide treatment options
 - List of professionals to assist with ash removals
 - List of wood utilization companies
 - Downloadable outreach materials
 - Map of confirmed EAB detections in NJ

It was established to unify the outreach and education message to residents, municipalities, and counties within the State on how to deal with EAB. The Task Force maintains emeraldashborer.nj.gov. This site is updated regularly with new information and resources to assist with addressing EAB, as well as to track EAB detections throughout the state.

Grants

Through participation in the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program (NJUCF), grant opportunities are available for municipalities and counties to assist with EAB/Ash management planning, reforestation, and tree planting. There is currently no funding source to assist with ash removals. Municipalities and counties that do not participate in the NJUCF should consider becoming accredited for all the benefits the program can provide to your community. 💰

Visit communityforestry.nj.gov for more information.

Rosa Yoo is a Regional Forester with the New Jersey Forest Service. She is the Forest Health Specialist, mainly focusing on exotic invasive insects and diseases that threaten New Jersey's forests.

Act now

Address EAB today, because in as little as 3 to 5 years there may be no live ash in your communities, in your forests, or around your homes.

With more than 24 million ash in forested areas in New Jersey, and countless more in parks, landscapes, and then along streets, EAB-induced ash mortality will only increase and expand as time goes on unless treatment measures are started as soon as possible.

It is not too late to begin treatments on healthy ash trees you want to protect from EAB, and initiate removals on the other ash that are not slated for treatments.

Some areas of the state are at a critical point where EABs have been present for several years. Without action to slow the spread, widespread death of ash trees is a real possibility in the near future.

To address the EAB crisis in your town, develop a plan of action, prioritize areas or specific trees for management activities, and establish partnerships to get the work done.

EAB Task Force

In preparation for the EAB invasion, New Jersey established the New Jersey Emerald Ash Borer Task Force. It is comprised of representatives from:

- New Jersey Department of Agriculture
- New Jersey Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Rutgers University
- USDA Forest Service

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