

EMERALD ASH BORER

Agrilus planipennis

In July 2006 this destructive pest was found infesting trees in Wilmette and Evanston. Chalet customers are rightly concerned so we've prepared this guide.

Why is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) such a concern?

- Since its discovery in the US in 2002, it has destroyed 20 million ash trees in the Midwest.
- Being a non-native species, it has no known predators.
- It is quick to destroy ash trees, of which there are 130 million in the Chicagoland area.
- It has cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars to date, a figure that could mount rapidly.



What does the EAB look like?

- The adult beetle is shiny, dark metallic green, ½" long and 1/8" wide. When they flap their wings, you can see their copper, purple colored abdomen.
- Larvae are flat, creamy colored, legless with wide heads and bell-shaped body segments.



What are the signs and symptoms of EAB?

- 1/8" D-shaped exit holes in ash tree trunks.
- Wilting or die-back starting at the top of the tree, progressing downward till the tree is bare.
- Splitting or cracking bark that separates from the trunk.
- Sprouts growing from the base of the trunk.
- Ash leaves are larger than normal.
- Increased presence of woodpeckers.



What exactly does the EAB do to infected trees?

- The larvae excavate serpentine tunnels just under the outer bark, in the tree cambium and phloem. This area conducts water and nutrients to the tree. The tunnels cut off nutrients and cause the tree to die.



What does an ash tree look like?

- Branches and buds are directly opposite each other; they are not staggered.
- Leaves are compound and have 5 – 11 leaflets. Don't confuse these leaves with boxelder leaves, which are also compound but almost always have only 3 – 5 leaflets.
- Bark on mature trees is tight with a distinct pattern of diamond-shaped ridges. On young trees, the bark is relatively smooth.
- Seeds are dry, oar-shaped samaras. They occur in clusters and hang on the tree until late fall or early winter.



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What else should I know about the EAB?

- Lifecycle: Adult beetles emerge May through August and feed moderately on ash foliage. Females lay eggs about two weeks after emergence, which hatch one to two weeks after that. The tiny larvae bore through the bark, feeding from July through October. They pupate in the spring and the new generation of adults emerges the next May or June.
- Spread: EAB can fly ½ to 1 mile from the tree from which they emerge. Most infestations occur in uncertified firewood shipments.
(Chalet's firewood is purchased from non-infested areas and is certified non-infested.)



What can I do to reduce the likelihood of an infestation?

- Consider using insecticides only if ashes are within a 5 mile radius of the current infestation.
- If within the 5 mile radius, professionals can inject an ash trunk or treat the soil around it. Contact Jeff Hoover, our arborist, at 847. 688.0561.
- Homeowners can treat the soil itself with Bayer Advanced Garden Tree & Shrub Insect Control (active ingredient imidacloprid). Best control is achieved with small trees-less than 8" diameter.
- Ashes with trunk diameters larger than 6" may be implanted with ACECAP 97 Systematic Insecticide Tree implants at 4" intervals around the trunk base.



What do I do if I suspect an infestation?

- Call the Illinois Department of Agriculture (DOA) Hotline at (800) 641.3934
- If in Wilmette, go to www.wilmette.com, click on "Emerald Ash Borer" and complete the EAB form.
- Learn more at www.emeraldashborer.info.

