

ASH TREES AND THE EMERALD ASH BORER

The EAB is a pest that originally came to the US from Asia, probably transported in packing materials. Detected first in 2002 in Michigan, this half-inch long beetle has a green metallic sheen on its wings and a reddish stomach. The EAB is extremely invasive, infesting millions of ash trees by burrowing under their bark and killing them by cutting off their nutrient supply. The toll over the past twelve years in 21 states is estimated to be between \$7 and \$25 billion for state and local governments and landowners to remove trees killed by this parasite.

SHAKER'S EMERALD ASH BORER PLAN

Over a five-year period, the City of Shaker Heights has identified and removed all tree lawn ash trees in the City. The Forestry Department has replanted these trees with many different species of trees in the hope of diversifying our urban forest and preventing future threats to it. However, many ash trees remain in our parklands and on private property. See [Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan](#).

IDENTIFICATION

Because of the threat to any ash tree, it is important to identify ash trees on your property. Ash trees can grow 60 to 80 feet tall and are prized for their shade and ornamental landscape value. The branches and buds of ash trees are opposite with a single bud at the end of the branch. Twigs are gray to brown and have no waxy coating. Leaves are compound, generally 8-12 inches long, with 5-9 leaflets per leaf. The leaves may be finely toothed or have smooth edges. See [Ash Tree Identification](#).

Signs of infestation include cracks in the bark, where woodpeckers may be seen foraging; thinning of the upper branches; sprouting new growth at the base; and D-shaped holes in the bark of the trunk, where the adult beetles exit.

TREATMENT

Although there is no known cure for an ash tree infected by the emerald ash borer, there are chemical treatments administered by qualified arborists/tree services. While these treatments have not been proven to cure an infested tree, there is some belief that they may prolong its life. There is also prophylactic removal of the tree either before or after infestation. A future hope may be with the U.S. Forestry Service which is currently experimenting with three native species in the fight against the EAB: red-bellied woodpeckers that eat the beetle larvae, white-breasted nuthatches, and Chinese parasitic wasps. Although not yet commercially available, these native and non-native species that eat the beetle may ultimately be the only biological control against the permanent spread of the insect infestation and inevitable death of much of our native ash forest.

Routine Inspection of ash trees on your property is important to do, especially in summer, when the thinning of the leafy canopy may be easier to detect. If possible infestation is present, evaluation by an arborist or the Shaker Superintendent of Forestry should occur, to determine if the tree is infested, and should be removed. A large dead tree is often more costly to remove than one that is still alive—as live trees often may be climbed safely, avoiding costly large machinery for removal.

For help in identifying ash trees or the emerald ash borer, call Superintendent of Forestry, Pat Neville, at 491-1490.

For more information about the Emerald Ash Borer: www.emeraldashborer.info