

City of South Milwaukee Engineering Department

EMERALD ASH BORER ALERT & INFORMATION

What is Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)?

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect species. EAB infests all types of local ash trees and their ornamental varieties (green, white, black). EAB is naturally found in Asia and was likely introduced to the United States with imported cargo. North American native ash trees have little resistance to this aggressive pest. It was detected in Michigan in 2002, and has killed millions of ash trees.

EAB is confirmed to be in South Milwaukee, and has likely been in the city for at least four or five years. **If you have ash trees on your property, you can expect them to die from EAB in the next few years unless you are treating them with insecticides.**

What does EAB look like, and how does it kill ash trees?



The adult EAB is metallic green and emerges from ash trees, through the bark, in mid-June through August. They are only about 1/2”

long. As these insects exit a tree, they leave behind a 1/8 inch “D” shaped exit hole in the tree bark.

Adult EAB fly to ash trees to reproduce. Tiny EAB larvae hatch, bore/chew through the bark, and begin feeding on the phloem (a nutritious tissue beneath the bark).



Larvae eat and grow for up to two years. As they move around under the bark, they create a path (gallery) which has been described as having a meandering “S” shaped, winding pattern. The feeding and tunneling disrupts the flow of food and water, which causes the trees to die. In the spring, larvae transform into the adult stage and emerge from the tree.



At low numbers, EAB larvae will be very hard to detect because the tree shows no outward signs of infestation. However, heavily-infested trees can go from looking healthy to being dead within a year or two.

The severe cold of the 2013-2014 winter season may have killed some of the larvae, but unfortunately the infestation will continue to increase rapidly.

What is the city doing about EAB and ash trees?

With partial funding through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, a city-wide inventory of public trees was completed in 2013. 745 ash trees were identified within street rights-of-way or on other city parcels (not including ash trees within the parkway or Grant Park).

The City (or its Contractor) will be systematically removing all ash trees, based on their condition, over the next 8 to 10 years. City officials have decided not to treat any of the ash trees due to high costs and the requirement for continuous treatment. Removals will begin in 2014. Some ash trees that appear healthy may be removed due to anticipated die off, as a preemptive measure.



Public street trees will be removed at the City's cost, using funding from the general fund budget. The city has a very limited forestry budget at this time, and new trees will not be planted until such time that a program is funded. Please check the city's website at www.smwi.org for updates on EAB and forestry program.

Will the city require removal of ash trees on private property?

If you have ash trees on your property, you can expect them to die from EAB in the next few years unless you are treating them with insecticides.

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Similar to other tree species on private property, the city may require removal of a diseased, dying or dead tree, especially if the tree is a potential hazard to the public or to private property. Costs of tree removal on private property are the property owner's responsibility.

A city forester is not available at this time for identification of ash trees or EAB. For more information, please view websites listed below or consult an arborist.

What do ash trees look like?

All types of ash are easily identified by twig or leaf. Great visuals can be found at <http://emeraldashborer.info/homeownerinfo.cfm> under "Ash Tree Identification Bulletin" and "Distinguishing Ash from Other Common Trees".



Insecticide Treatments

Insecticide applications to protect ash trees are available through arborists and are usually done in the spring. However, continuous treatments every 1-3 years will be required to deter infestation. The benefits and costs of treatment should be considered by home owners. Visit www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov for information about insecticide treatments. Lightly infested trees may be able to be saved if treatments begin early. Unfortunately insecticides are usually unable to save trees that are already heavily infested.

Some municipalities are treating healthy ash trees, either to save a few or as a temporary measure to spread out the costs of tree removals over several years.

Firewood

Please don't move firewood very far in order to help prevent the spread of EAB and other pests and diseases. Buy it or collect it where you plan to burn it.

Property owners will be notified prior to street tree removal adjacent to properties, and should have the option to keep the wood for firewood. Remaining wood will be chipped to less than one inch dimensions or utilized for firewood.



Tree Planting

Finally, please consider planting new trees to replace the lost urban forest canopy. You can help by adding trees to the larger portion of the urban canopy – private property. Guidelines for selection of trees will be available on the city website. There are restrictions to the type of trees and locations that trees may be planted within the public street right-of-way, and a "no fee" permit is required. Street tree regulations can be found in Chapter 9 of the municipal code.

Signs of EAB

Specific Symptoms:

1. 1/8-inch, capital "D" shaped exit holes.
2. Thinning of leaves followed by dieback of branches.
3. Squiggly, S-shaped, meandering galleries just under the bark layer.
4. The presence of the insect itself – either the borer or the adult beetle. The borer is about 1½ inches long, cream colored and segmented. The adult beetle is a dark green metallic color about 1/2" in length.

Non-Specific Symptoms:

1. Splits in tree bark.
2. Water sprouts (some call suckers) – up and down the trunk.

For more information, please visit:

www.emeraldashborer.info or
www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov

For a map of public ash trees, please visit the City website: smwi.org

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