

Emerald Ash Borer Info for West Windsor

A quick reference:

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect which came from Asia, most likely in wooden packing crates. In Asia there are natural predators and trees have a natural resistance to the EAB so the impact to the ash population there is insignificant. Unfortunately, that's not the case in Vermont.

Where has the EAB been found in Vermont?

EAB was first discovered in northern Orange County, Vermont in February 2018 and now has been confirmed in Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Grand Isle, Orange, and Washington Counties. The most recent discovery was in Derby Line, VT on July 2nd of this year. To date, no EAB has been confirmed in Windsor County.

<https://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont>

How does EAB spread? Can we impact the spread of EAB?

One way that EAB spreads is via the beetle's natural flight patterns. By this means, EAB only spreads a few miles a year. It spreads much more rapidly through the movement of infested firewood or logs. This is the most likely reason EAB is present in Vermont.

Because movement of firewood is easy and more likely to cause the spread of EAB, a ban on movement of untreated firewood from out of state is in place. Movement of firewood from known infestation areas is also restricted. To help slow the spread of EAB:

- Acquire untreated firewood locally.
- Follow the guidelines for moving ash saw logs or log length firewood, ideally, during the EAB non-flight season from Oct 1 – May 31.

<https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/documents/pests/SlowSpreadWoodVT%20FINAL.pdf>

Should we cut down all of our ash trees now?

Preferably no.

There are a number of reasons this is not recommended:

- The spread of EAB is very slow and as the following excerpt from the VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation indicates, actions which slow the spread of EAB give time to develop additional strategies. Research on the use of parasitic wasps against the EAB is ongoing and showing some progress. In Michigan, they are seeing a reduction of EAB in areas being tested with the introduction of these natural predators. It would be premature to cut down healthy trees before further studies are completed.
- From VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation:

“One benefit of slowing the spread of EAB is to allow research more time to help us understand this insect. An example is a recently published paper by scientists at Michigan State looking at ash condition in southeast Michigan. While noting the “catastrophic” ash mortality, the authors found many white ash that were still alive even though they had been attacked by EAB. The smaller white ash size classes had more survivors. It’s safe to say that EAB has earned its reputation as a tree-killer, and that attacks on the boles of surviving trees will likely affect timber quality. But while we wait for additional science-based information, this research suggests that maintaining ash as a component of our forests is a goal we may be able to realize.”

<https://entomologytoday.org/2019/07/10/promising-new-parasitoid-drills-down-emerald-ash-borers-spathius-galinae/>

https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive_species/eab/control_management/biological_control

- Most importantly – premature harvesting of ash trees may result in killing/removing naturally resistant trees and losing this important genetic line.
- Ash trees exist in great numbers on private and public land in West Windsor. It’s highly unlikely enough trees could be removed to reduce the risk of EAB spreading to our town. This has been unsuccessfully attempted in previously infested states time and again. Even when all ash within 1½ miles of known infested trees were cut, the beetle was soon found beyond the treatment area.

However, public safety as well as the economic and environmental impacts are real considerations. How to deal with ash trees on public land and Town Right of Ways, should be considered and will hopefully be studied and addressed through a Town Response Plan.

Links to some of the resources available to towns and landowners:

https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/eab_municipal_management_strategies_final.pdf

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/homeownerseab.pdf>

<https://www.vtinvasives.org>

https://vtcommunityforestry.org/sites/default/files/pictures/vt_first_detector_position_description_2019_002.pdf

What if you suspect you have an EAB infested tree?

It is preferable not to cut or move the suspect tree.

Instead, report it to one of the following:

Ginger Nickerson – UVM, Forest Pest Education Coordinator – 802.476.2003
- ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu

or myself - the local representative of the VT Forest Pest First Detector program - 484.3931 – WWEAB2014@gmail.com

It is important to note that there are diseases affecting ash trees in a manner similar to an EAB infestation as well as insects that can be easily confused with EAB. This is why it is important we verify EAB presence before assuming it has arrived in West Windsor.

Ken Parrot