



Managing Emerald Ash Borer in Your Woodland — Where to Start

Annemarie Smith and Dan Balsler, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry

Daniel A. Herms, Associate Professor, Department of Entomology, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, and State Specialist, Ohio State University Extension

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is an invasive insect that has killed millions of ash trees in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and other states since its accidental importation from Asia. The larvae of this wood-boring beetle feed just under the bark of ash trees, destroying the tissues that transport water and nutrients between the roots and the canopy. EAB is capable of killing all species of ash native to Ohio, including green, white, black, and blue ash. The pest was discovered near Detroit, Michigan, in 2002 and has spread south into northwest Ohio, where it is now firmly established. Numerous isolated infestations found in other parts of Ohio resulted from artificial spread of infested ash material, including nursery stock, firewood, logs, branches, wood, and woodchips. As EAB continues to spread, it has the potential to decimate ash throughout North America, with effects reminiscent of Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight.

The current management strategy is to contain the artificial spread of the insect through quarantines that regulate the movement of ash trees and wood.

The goal of the quarantines is to slow the spread of EAB while the scientific community researches effective control methods and to provide time for woodlot owners, land managers, and municipalities to proactively manage their ash resource. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) has quarantined infested counties within Ohio to regulate the movement of ash material to non-infested areas within the state. In addition, a federal quarantine was enacted by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to regulate the movement of ash material and firewood out of Ohio.



The current lack of an effective tool to control EAB populations and their natural spread means that all ash trees in Ohio will eventually be at risk. How much time do you have before EAB reaches your property? This is a difficult question. It depends on your location and the effectiveness of the quarantine program. Small, isolated infestations of EAB spread slowly, less than one-half mile per year. However, the rate of spread increases as the size of the infestation widens, and the core infestation in northwest Ohio is spreading much faster. Furthermore, additional outlier infestations are being discovered on a regular basis. Property owners should monitor the status of the EAB infestation closely and prepare to respond quickly as new infestations are detected.

Woodland owners should also keep a watchful eye on their ash trees for signs of infestation. Information on the current status of EAB in Ohio and how to diagnose infestations can be found on the Ohio State University EAB Outreach Team's website at <http://www.ashalert.osu.edu>.

Considering the destructiveness of this insect and the regulations associated with both the state and federal quarantines, changes in your forest management strategy may be necessary if ash trees are part of your woodland. Ohio Division of Forestry service foresters are available to assist you with these forest-management issues, as are professional consulting and



industrial foresters. The closer your property is to an infested area, the sooner you should consult a forester. A professional forester can evaluate the feasibility of reducing the ash component of your woodland through a timber sale, provide advice that will help you minimize the impact of EAB on your woodland, and help you develop a stewardship plan that will serve as a guide to achieving your long-term woodland ownership goals. If a timber sale is warranted, a professional forester can estimate the number of ash trees and their volume, mark the trees for the timber sale, and provide information on timber sale contracts and marketing your timber sale.



The condition and composition of the woodland will influence the selection of ash trees and perhaps other species for harvest. The size of your ash trees, the market demand for ash, and your management objectives will also determine which trees you select for harvest. Healthy, well-formed ash trees with dominant crown position may be retained as future crop trees provided that they are large enough to reach merchantable size before EAB is expected to advance to your area through natural spread. Comprehensive management information can be found in OSU Extension Fact Sheet F-59-Rev06a, "Management Options for Minimizing Emerald Ash Borer Impact on Ohio Woodlands" (available at <http://ohioline.osu.edu>).

Ash is not recommended for planting in reforestation projects in Ohio due to the large number of EAB infestations that have already been discovered throughout the state. Reforestation projects should emphasize tree diversity by planting a variety of species, which will reduce the impact of any pest that may threaten Ohio woodlands in the future. OSU Extension Bulletin 924, "Ash Replacements for Urban and Woodland Plantings" (available at <http://ohioline.osu.edu>), provides useful information and guidelines for selecting appropriate species for your woodland.

If your wooded property is within a quarantined county, this means that your ash trees and their products (including bark, logs, and firewood) are regulated and cannot be moved out of the quarantine area without a compliance agreement with ODA. Compliance agreements outline the procedures, timetables, and other stipulations that allow you to legally salvage your trees while minimizing the risk of spreading EAB. When salvaging ash trees, be sure to understand your legal responsibilities related to the quarantine. A list of EAB compliant companies and additional information on quarantine zones and other regulatory issues can be found on ODA's website at <http://www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab/>.

Even outside the quarantined parts of Ohio, the risk of EAB infestation in our state is quickly increasing. It is recommended that you take action now and have your woodland evaluated by a professional forester. If your woodland lies outside of an Ohio quarantined county, the movement of ash wood from your property is not regulated by ODA's intrastate quarantine, but the federal quarantine still applies if harvested ash material will be moved across state lines. For more information on the federal quarantine, visit the APHIS website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>.

Remember, Ohio Division of Forestry service foresters are available to assist you with these forest management issues, as are professional consulting and industrial foresters. Landowners who are proactive and work with a professional forester will have more control over the impact of the EAB invasion on their woodland and are more likely to achieve their woodland management goals! For more information about contacting a service forester, visit the Division of Forestry's website at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/forestry/landowner/>.

The Ohio State University
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Section of Communications and Technology

