

President's MESSAGE



Do We Plant Ash Trees ?

It is early September as I write these words, and a fourth positive identification of an emerald ash borer (EAB) outbreak has been confirmed, in Winnetka, IL.

For those who aren't geographically savvy, the three Illinois cities closest to Chicago with EAB are Evanston, Wilmette and Winnetka. They are all in Cook County, on the lakefront, and are just south of Glencoe, the home of the Chicago Botanic Gardens.

EAB was first found in Kane County, Illinois, two counties due south of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Some researchers feel if you are within a two-county range, it is time to prepare for EAB treatment. That puts Rock, Walworth, Kenosha & Racine counties on notice that EAB is just to the south.

EAB was also recently rediscovered in Prince George's County in Maryland where it has not been seen for almost three years. In North America, emerald ash borer has been found in over 40,000 square miles. It is the apocalypse of ash trees. It is no longer a matter of if EAB is found in our communities, but rather when. About 20 million ash trees have already been killed, and eight billion forest trees are threatened.

This insect is hard to detect, but primarily feeds on ash trees (*Fraxinus*). All species of ash are at risk, but green ash is apparently EABs' favorite meal. Please remember that European mountainash (*Sorbus*) is not a species of *Fraxinus*, and therefore, is not at risk for EAB infestation.

The insect generally moves slowly, but many adults have been tracked for more than one mile from their sources and one had been tracked for three miles. With human aid this insect is moving even

greater distances. Please remind folks NOT to move firewood. Emphasis needs to be placed on quarantine to slow its spread.

Wisconsin is a large state, and many nurseries I visit still have ash for sale. But I would deter anyone from using ash in the southern Wisconsin area. Furthermore, planting of ash trees on a large-scale basis should not be done. I have heard discussions about refraining from planting any ash for five years and then re-evaluate.

However, you may have clients in your area who want an ash because it was Grandma's favorite, or for other sentimental reasons. If individual plantings are done, the caretaker needs to be aware of the risks, the state plan, and possibly be willing to protect their trees with imidacloprid.

It is possible that a sincere client will request an ash tree, and with your input they can understand the consequences and the potential for failure of the plant. You are merely informing them of the facts, just as you would do if they planned to build within a wooded lot.

Please remember that diversity is the key to minimizing pest and disease problems, and we must utilize the other great trees we have available for future planting. Please visit the WAA Web site, www.waa-isa.org/, and view Dr. Laura Jull's "Suggested Ash Alternative Information." Just click on "Hot Topics" under the "Emerald Ash Borer Information" heading.

The WAA does have an EAB committee that has been working diligently on collecting information and discussing what the WAA will send out to its members.

Please work safely and be aware!
David Graham, ASLA, ISA, WAA