

## Bee Friendly, Bee Wise

## Checklist for M a y

### Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Decimates Ash Trees

The Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, is a metallic green colored insect with a metallic copper-red tone abdomen. It is the size of a grain of rice, about 1/2 inch long and 1/8 inch wide. This exotic insect was inadvertently



carried into the United States in solid wood packing material from Asia. It was first discovered in Michigan in 2002. By 2017, it was found in 17 other states, including New Jersey, as well as in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.  
(Left: Enlarged Image of EAB)

Ash trees were originally used to replace elm trees decimated by Dutch Elm disease. They are used in landscaping to provide beauty, shade and animal habitats. Ash trees are an important source of wood for furniture, musical instruments, baseball bats and various other sports equipment.

The EAB has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees. The cost to property owners and nursery operators, municipalities, and forest product industries is estimated at over 10.7 billion dollars! As of this writing, the cost includes treatment, removal and replacement of more than 17 million ash trees.

Regulatory agencies and the USDA (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture) currently enforce quarantines of infested tree wood and impose fines on the illegal transportation of infested material in order to contain the infestation.

Initially, trees show little evidence of infestation since the EAB starts its work at the top of the tree, which is difficult to see. Excessive woodpecker activity and woodpecker damage is frequently the first sign of the infestation. As the infestation progresses, the crown will die back noticeably, and the tree will show epicormic branching (excessive branching at the tree base). There will be visible bark splits as well as prevalent and visible D-shaped larval exit holes. S-shaped tunnel galleries, sawdust and larval frass (poo) are visible under the bark when it is peeled away. Careful observation between May and August, when adult EAB is active, may reveal the presence of the insect itself.

Infestation management includes treatment with pesticides and, more recently, biological controls using natural enemies such as tiny parasitic wasps. They attack the EAB eggs and paralyze the larvae. The only recourse, when a tree is beyond saving, is careful removal and disposal and replacement with non-ash trees.

If you think you have an ash tree be alert to possible infestation and contact your local Agricultural Extension Center for information. They can assist you in identifying your tree and possible EAB damage. They will help you determine the best course of action for your needs. For more information, see <http://emeraldashborer.nj.gov> and <http://agresearch.ars.usda.gov>.

### Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Use Mother's Day as a rule of thumb for planting summer-blooming annuals and tender vegetable plants. Cover tender plants if frost is expected.
- ✓ Be aware that the last frost date in Ocean County will vary from May 15 thru 30, depending on your location.
- ✓ Plant dahlias, gladiolas, lilies, cannas and other summer flowering bulbs this month. See <http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/resources/summer-flowering-bulbs>
- ✓ Work to eliminate weeds before they go to seed. Otherwise, you will be fighting them for years to come!

### Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Remove spent rhododendron and azalea blossoms and apply a fertilizer for acid-loving plants, if needed.

### Lawn

- ✓ Eliminate lawn weeds. Pull by hand or spot-treat with herbicide.
- ✓ Mow lawn as needed to keep grass height at 2½ to 3 inches.

### Ticks

- ✓ Be aware that the risk of being bitten by an infected deer tick is greatest in May and June, when the nymph stage is active. See Rutgers Fact Sheet FS443, "Prevent Tick Bites"



