

## Emerald Ash Borer

The emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis*, is an invasive, highly destructive wood-boring insect that attacks ash trees. All species of ash in the genus *Fraxinus* appear to be susceptible to the EAB in North America.

The EAB originated in Asia and is believed to have arrived in North America on solid wood packing material from China. First detected in Michigan in 2002, it has now been seen in 12 states, including Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and has killed more than 40 million ash trees. The EAB can be brought into areas by firewood, twigs, timber, and nursery stock. Illegal transporting of ash firewood is thought to be the major cause of new outbreaks.

The EAB adult is bright metallic green and ½” long with a flattened back. It has a purple abdominal segment beneath wing covers. Females lay eggs on bark crevices. After hatching, larvae chew through the bark to the cambium layer where they feed and make S-shaped tunnels. Larvae pupate in late spring, and adults emerge in summer. Since the cambium layer is the site for nutrient and water transport as well as wood and bark production, larval feeding in this area is lethal to the tree.

Heavily infested trees show canopy dieback, usually starting at the top. One-third to one-half of the branches may die within a year. Most of the canopy will be dead within two years of when symptoms are first noticed. EAB adults leave a capital "D"-shaped emergence hole in the bark approximately 1/8” in diameter. Excessive branch sprouts on the tree trunk below the dead area and vertical bark splits are some of the other symptoms of EAB infestation.

Treatment of the EAB depends on the extent of damage. If a tree has lost more than 50% of its canopy, it's probably too late to save it. It is best to begin using insecticides while ash trees are relatively healthy because most of the insecticides used for EAB control must be transported systemically (within the tree). *At this time, EAB is a potential new pest in Ocean County.*

A website for multi-agency information is [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info). **Remember, do not transport firewood.**



## Checklist for March

### **Flower and Vegetable Gardens**

- ✓ Begin your spring garden clean-up.
- ✓ Start indoor seeds that require 10-12 weeks before transplanting. Use only sterilized potting mix and clean pots. <http://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/garden/documents/GrowYourOwnVegandFlowerSeedlings.pdf>
- ✓ There is time to have your soil tested by the county agricultural extension. Vegetables grow best in soil with a pH of 6-6.5; grass in a pH of 6-7.0. Amend as indicated.
- ✓ Add 4"-6" of compost to your planting beds and thoroughly work into your soil.
- ✓ Fertilize bulbs before growth starts.
- ✓ Plant peas on St. Patrick's Day when the soil can be worked.
- ✓ Inspect hoses for leaks; repair or replace.

### **Trees and Shrubs**

- ✓ Prune all plant material to remove diseased, dead, weak, or crossing branches. Complete pruning trees before new growth begins.

### **Lawn**

- ✓ Seed new lawn at end of month; see Rutgers Fact Sheet FS584 "**Seeding Your Lawn**" for more information. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS584>