



BACKGROUND / FICHE DOCUMENTAIRE

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Frequently Asked Questions: the emerald ash borer in Ottawa

Ottawa – The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has confirmed the presence of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in Ottawa. This insect pest was discovered on ash trees within the St-Laurent Boulevard and Ogilvie Road area. As required in these circumstances, City staff immediately contacted the CFIA, the lead Federal Government agency on invasive alien pests, and the presence of the insect was confirmed by CFIA inspectors.

What is the extent of the problem in Ottawa?

This is yet to be determined. The EAB was discovered by City Staff in the St-Laurent Boulevard and Ogilvie Road area. Investigators are inspecting trees within a 2 km radius around this location and will expand the investigation as required. The CFIA is continuing with their studies and surveys of the area to determine the extent of the problem. It is a time consuming process, which may not be completed for weeks or months.

What is the EAB?

The EAB is a highly destructive insect pest of ash trees that was discovered in Canada for the first time in 2002. It has killed a large number of ash trees in south-western Ontario and poses a major economic and environmental threat to urban and forested areas across Canada and the U.S. The EAB attacks and kills only ash trees, excluding Mountain Ash and does not pose a risk to human health.

What does the EAB look like?

The beetle is metallic green in colour and is 8.5-14.0 mm (about 2 inch) long and 3.1-3.4 mm (1/8 inch) wide. While the back of the insect is an iridescent, metallic green, the underside is a bright, emerald green. The body is narrow and elongated, and the head is flat. The eyes are kidney shaped and usually black. EAB larva is white and flat, has distinctive bell shaped segments and can grow up to 30 mm long.

Which species of tree are susceptible to attack by the EAB?

In North America, the EAB has been found to attack and kill all North American species of ash. The mountain ash is not related to ash trees and is not attacked by EAB. Infested ash trees in North America generally die after two to three years, but heavily infested trees have been observed to die after one year of beetle attack.

How is EAB spread?

The human movement of infested materials such as firewood, logs, branches, nursery stock, chips or other ash wood is the most common way EAB has been spread. Research on EAB indicates most adults move only 500 metres upon emergence.

What do I do if I suspect my ash tree is infested?

Report signs of EAB infestation to the CFIA.

Toll free: 1-866-463-6017, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For more information visit the CFIA web site: www.inspection.gc.ca

Buy and burn firewood locally. Do not move suspected materials.

What about leaf and yard waste pickup? Will this be affected?

City staff are presently preparing a plan to address the problem. At this time, however, the pick-up of residential yard and leaf waste is not affected.

Can I use pesticides or other methods to get rid of the EAB?

There is no commercial product available that will eradicate the EAB. There are currently pilot projects and studies underway in Canada and the U.S. to determine if a deterrent is viable.

How serious a threat is the EAB?

EAB poses a very serious threat to all species of ash trees throughout their range in the U.S. and Canada. During the relatively short time that EAB has been in North America, it has built up its populations to damaging levels and is believed to have killed in excess of 20 million trees in the U.S. and Canada. Billions more trees across North America are at risk of infestation and death.

What is the importance of ash trees?

About 25 to 30% of urban Ottawa trees are ash. Ash trees are an important part of Canada's urban and rural landscape. They are commonly found on city streets, in woodlots, in windbreaks and in forests across southern Canada. In many areas of Canada, ash trees are one of the main trees that are suitable for street planting in urban areas.

Where did the EAB come from? How did it get to Canada and how long has it been here?

The EAB is native to China and eastern Asia, and was found in North America in 2002. In May 2002, it was discovered in south-eastern Michigan in the U.S. and in July 2002 it was found in Essex County in Ontario. As is the case with some other exotic pests that affect plants and trees, it is believed to have been accidentally introduced to North America on imported wood packaging or crating material.

Who has the responsibility for regulatory control of the EAB

Under the authority of the *Plant Protection Act*, the CFIA is the agency responsible for preventing pests of quarantine significance from entering or spreading within Canada. When pests of quarantine significance become established a decision must be made, in consultation with other federal, provincial and municipal government departments and stakeholders, whether there is merit in trying to eradicate or contain the pest. Continued efforts and cooperation of all partners are required to protect Canada's valuable forest resources.

Will the CFIA or the City remove trees in infested areas?

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) conducts ongoing surveys to determine the leading edge of EAB infestation in Canada and to detect any new populations that may have resulted through human activities, such as the movement of infested firewood, nursery stock or other forest products. The removal of infested host trees is no longer considered to be an effective tool in the management of EAB in areas likely to be generally infested. There will be no further tree removals within the regulated areas except for research purposes.

For more information:
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Public inquiries
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