

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer, or EAB is an invasive wood-boring insect native to Asia that was first identified in 2002 in Michigan, although it is suspected it was introduced to North America in the 1990's. It has progressed from the eastern part of the country toward the west, often traveling along interstate highways. As of September 1st, 2016 it has been confirmed in 28 states, including many bordering Oklahoma such as Texas, Kansas, and Arkansas. While it hasn't been confirmed in Oklahoma, it is only a matter of time before it arrives.

This pest is a significant threat to urban and rural forests. EAB attacks all species of ash and has the ability to kill healthy trees in the span of 3 years. It has killed millions of ash trees in the United States since its arrival and caused firewood/ wood product quarantines in infested counties. EAB has also cost municipalities and property owners millions of dollars. (check out <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/> for more information.)

How to identify EAB:

Although it is unlikely you will see the adult borer, it is a metallic green color and about 2/3rd the diameter of a penny.

More likely you will notice ash trees with dying or dead branches in the upper crown, and shoots or suckers along the trunk. Other symptoms included heavy feeding from woodpeckers and bark splitting exposing feeding galleries that look like spaghetti tunnels.

Luckily, our understanding of how EAB can be managed has increased since it's arrival and it is now possible that some ash trees can be protected even in areas with a large infestation. Dealing with this pest will be something our community will need to discuss in the near future.

Please contact an arborist if you think you might have an infestation or have an ash tree and would like to know more about how to deal with this pest when it does arrive in Oklahoma.