

Roadside ash impact



Ash tree health is currently threatened by the arrival of emerald ash borer, a non-native and invasive insect that attacks all species of ash trees.

Once infested, most ash trees will die within three to five years, posing a risk to all road users. Many towns have started a roadside ash tree inventory that tallies and locates ash trees that would affect the road if they were to break or fall.

Identifying the presence of ash trees that may affect the road helps us:

- understand how ash trees are distributed on the landscape surrounding survey roads.
- estimate how many ash trees the town will need to manage as emerald ash borers infest ash trees.
- identify opportunities for replanting or forest regeneration after ash trees die or are removed.

Recommendations

Conduct an [ash tree inventory](#)¹ to determine the location, distribution, and size of ash trees along rural roads. Determine if these ash trees are in the public right-of-way, the utility right-of-way, or on private land.

Create a town-wide emerald ash borer management plan using [municipal ash tree management strategies](#).² Plan to use ash wood locally to slow the spread of emerald ash borer through movement of infested wood.

Ensure that anyone managing municipal trees is trained in the safety risks posed by brittle and infested ash trees. See [emerald ash borer management](#)³ resources listed by Vermont Urban & Community Forestry.

Anticipate the death or removal of roadside ash trees, particularly where planting in the right-of-way itself is challenging. Consider targeted planting efforts coordinated with neighboring landowners to improve roadside canopy, reduce



The wood of ash trees removed from the right-of-way is usually left for the landowner, although some wood is picked up unofficially by those wanting firewood. Transport of untreated ash wood is a prime vector of emerald ash borer spread.



ABOVE LEFT Large ash trees line a rural road. Both the municipality and the landowner will feel the impact of dead or downed trees along this property.

ABOVE RIGHT inventorying the diameter, condition, and location of roadside ash trees enables towns to plan for the decline and death of trees in the public right-of-way.

road erosion, protect water quality, and increase landowner privacy, particularly where right-of-way vegetation is bordered by agricultural fields or lawn.

Note the timing of invasive plant flowering and seed set when planning any tree removal work. Monitor ash removal sites for invasive plants that often thrive on disturbed soil and with the increased sunlight resulting from the new canopy breaks.

Slow the spread⁴ of emerald ash borer by following state recommendations when moving or processing ash wood.

Ensure that private homeowners and landowners understand the costs, risks, and benefits of managing roadside ash trees proactively through chemical treatment or tree removal. Share [resources for homeowners⁵](#) interested in learning more about ash tree management on their property.

Resources

1. "Ash Tree Inventories," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_AshTreeInventories.
2. Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, *Municipal Ash Management Strategies in Response to Emerald Ash Borer*, bit.ly/VTUCF_MunicipalAsh.
3. "Emerald Ash Borer Management," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_EAB.
4. "Slow the Spread of EAB," Vermont Invasives, bit.ly/VT_SlowTheSpread.
5. "Resources for Homeowners, Emerald Ash Borer in Vermont," Vermont Invasives, bit.ly/EABinVermont.