

Prepare for emerald ash borer and manage ash tree health



Emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive beetle that infests all species of ash in North America, was first detected in Vermont in February of 2018.

The insect is confirmed in multiple locations statewide and is likely present in much broader areas than have currently been noted.

Once present, EAB may kill 99% of ash trees that are not chemically treated. Ash trees infested with EAB become brittle and break in unpredictable ways. Ash trees along public roads can pose a safety risk to road crews or tree professionals charged with removing them and to all road users who may be impacted by dying or dead trees. All Vermont towns are encouraged to prepare for and manage the impacts of EAB and the loss of ash trees.

At present, the [Vermont Tree Warden Statutes](#)¹ do not allow for the removal of any healthy ash trees under the purview of the tree warden without a public hearing. Municipal ash trees that do not show signs of infestation and pose no risk to people or property are not automatically eligible for removal as hazard or risk trees. The Vermont Tree Warden Statutes may be [revised](#)² to include preemptive management strategies of trees threatened by EAB or other forest pests; at the time of this printing, amendments to the statutes have not passed through the legislature.

1. Vermont Tree Warden Statutes, V.S.A. Title 24 § 2502–§ 2512, bit.ly/VT_TreeWardenStatutes.

2. "Proposed Tree Warden Statutes Amendments," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_TreeWardenAmendments.

Recommendations

Plan for the arrival and impact of emerald ash borer. Ensure that the town selectboard, tree warden, and any conservation or park committees have access to the most recent information on EAB in Vermont. Visit the Vermont Invasives' "[Emerald Ash Borer in Vermont](#)" [webpage](#)¹ for updates on all confirmed EAB detections, designated infested areas, and best practices to slow the spread of EAB.

Consider a regional approach to EAB preparedness and management. Some Vermont towns have already combined resources and expertise to raise awareness about EAB, plan for roadside ash inventories, and share ash tree management approaches. In 2013, concerned citizens in and near

1. "Emerald Ash Borer in Vermont," Vermont Invasives, bit.ly/EABinVermont.

Lamoille County formed the [Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team \(RIIPT\)](#).² Using money awarded through Vermont Urban & Community Forestry's Caring for Canopy grants, RIIPT prepared four educational and fun public service announcements. It continues to provide outreach and expertise.

Complete a roadside ash tree inventory and EAB management plan. Prioritize roads for management based on traffic counts, density and condition of ash trees, and proximity of ash trees to the road. Understand that the town may not have permission to prune or remove all ash trees that may impact the right-of-way.

Review Vermont Urban & Community Forestry's other [online resources](#)³ regarding EAB management.



2. "Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team: A Collaborative Approach to Invasive Insects," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_RIIPT.

3. "Emerald Ash Borer Management," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_EAB.

Roadside ash tree inventories



Vermont Urban & Community Forestry supports ash tree inventories along roadsides, in town centers or village greens, and on any other high-use municipally owned or managed property. An inventory facilitates realistic management of emerald ash borer by assessing impact to publicly managed places, prioritizing tree removals, identifying trees best suited for treatment with pesticides, and planning budgets necessary for tree treatment or removal.

Using a GPS-enabled smart device and the free Collector for ArcGIS application, town volunteers or staff collect data on the size, location, and

condition of ash trees that may impact the right-of-way or town property when infested, decaying, or dead. Trees are categorized by management type (municipal right-of-way, utility right-of-way, or private) and noted as priority removal trees if they meet town-defined conditions such as poor tree health, large size, or excessive lean over the road.

Contact the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program for more information on [ash tree inventory](#)¹ options.

1. "Ash Tree Inventories," Vermont Urban & Community Forestry, bit.ly/VTUCF_AshTreeInventories.

Collecting data during an ash tree inventory using a smart device.