



Joshua Taflinger met a demand to combat the emerald ash borer.

# Battling the emerald ash borer

By fighting the pest, one man's business soars.

**J**OSHUA TAFLINGER, CERTIFIED arborist, took what started out as an add-on biz and parlayed it into a full-time career. Taflinger was running a tree removal business and performing injection services on the side, and it soon became obvious to him that the emerald ash borer problem in the Indianapolis area was worsening.

Taflinger had been battling the emerald ash borer, an invasive boring beetle, with an injection product from Arborjet. The results were encouraging, so Taflinger seized the opportunity to specialize in emerald ash borer diagnosis and treatment.

He performed his first treatment in 2008. In fall 2009, he dissolved his company's tree trimming and removal

division, focusing entirely on preserving Indianapolis's ash population. His new enterprise, IndyAsh, took root.

"I treated about 300 trees total in 2008, 2009 and 2010, but last year alone I did 1,800," says Taflinger. "I'm now preparing to do as many as 5,000 trees this year. People are starting to recognize a problem as entire neighborhoods begin showing signs. But there's still a long way to go in getting the message out that there's still time to save the ash population."

While the emerald ash borer infestation is a serious problem, Taflinger knows this won't be a lifelong business. "It's pretty new science, but the estimations right now show it's going to be a 12-year period from the time a tree starts showing signs of emerald ash



PHOTO COURTESY, JOSHUA TAFLINGER

## More Effective Less Expensive...



From **Tree Tech® Microinjection Systems** comes a full line of nationally labeled insecticides, fungicides, bactericides and fertilizers in leakproof microinjection units.

**Insecticides** - Acephate, Vivid®II, and MetaSystox®R

**Fungicides** - Bayleton® and Quali-Pro®(R)

**Fertilizers** - Our proprietary Nutriject™ formulations

**Bactericides** - Oxytetracycline antibiotic

950 SE 215th Ave.

Morrison, FL 32668

**1-800-622-2831**

e-mail: [info@treotech.net](mailto:info@treotech.net)

website: [www.treotech.net](http://www.treotech.net)

Tree Tech® Environmentally Sound Tree Health Care for the 21st century and beyond.

**Labels, MSDS Sheets and Other Information Available at [www.treotech.net](http://www.treotech.net)**

## » SERVICE SNAPSHOT

«« borer to the time it's totally killed off," he says. "That will happen to every ash tree in the area that hasn't been treated. Once the ash trees are gone or have been treated, there will no longer be a food source for the emerald ash borer, and they won't be able to survive. Though there's still a lot of time for me to do this, there will come a point where the service is no longer needed."

By then, Taflinger hopes to have gained enough knowledge and education to be a full-blown tree doctor. Currently, if he's called out to a job that is out of his realm, he calls in a specialist. His only focus is emerald ash borer. But even though he's not treating trees for other diseases, he says he's learning more every day. "I might refer the client to a tree doctor, but I'll still do the research so I'll have the experience to eventually do these diagnoses myself," he says. "I'd love to become a consultant and be able to offer a full-range of treatment services."

While his niche requires specialized

**COMPANY:** IndyAsh

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
Indianapolis, IN

**WHY FOCUS ON EMERALD ASH BORER TREATMENTS?** A passion and a need.

**WHAT KIND OF INVESTMENT IS NEEDED?** Someone starting out would need to invest in the IV equipment and a cordless drill, so you're looking at about \$2,000 for all of that. The most expensive part is the chemical, but that's purchased on an as-needed basis.

**BIGGEST RISK:** If you misdiagnose or the treatment doesn't work, the customer's tree is dead.

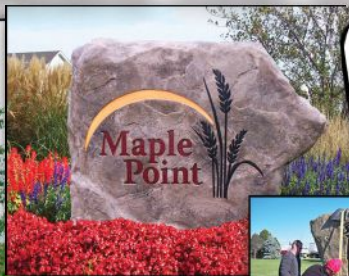
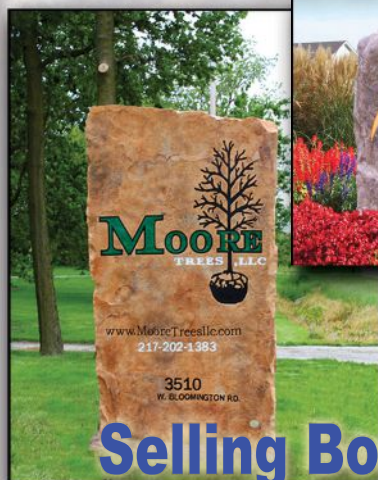
**OTHER CHALLENGES:** People are skeptical when they don't understand something, because they have to totally trust you. And treatment is not cheap.

knowledge, Taflinger says any business willing to invest in education can successfully add a tree injection service. "Even though I've made it my main focus, it does make a good side business," Taflinger says. "But the biggest mistake those who are new to the business will make is misidentification.... A lot of these conditions look alike. Good treatments are not cheap. The client is investing a lot of money. They'll know if you misdiagnosed it when the tree dies."

Taflinger suggests starting with just one treatment technician and seeing how it goes. "My best advice is to get educated," he says. "I would recommend about 50 to 100 hours of education. That's what makes my business a success. Anyone can buy the equipment, but if you can't answer your customers' questions you're not going to get the job."

The author is a freelance writer with six years of experience covering landscaping.

## Get in Before Your Competition...



I motivate my clients by offering products my competition can't!

"I made the Gooch And Company boulder 3 months after my initial training"  
-Franchisee Ron Nearon Kokomo, IN

### Selling Boulders "You" Build

A Franchise Worth Investing In!

\*Protected Territories  
\*80% Net Profit - 0% Competition†

Boulder  
Designs

www.BoulderDesigns.net  
Toll Free 877.892.2954

† Figures are published in our Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD) of March 2009 as mandated by the Federal Trade Commission. The above figures are actual. However, the FTC requires us to include the following statement: Caution: There is no assurance that you will do as well. If you rely on our figures, you must accept the risk of not doing as well.