

## Ash Trees —

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"Nobody in Michigan could identify what this insect was. The Smithsonian couldn't even identify it. Then it was sent to other scientists across the globe, and it was actually a Slovakian entomologist who was able to identify it as a beetle. Because the bug is kept in check in its native lands through tree resistance and natural predators, very little research has been done on it. Linsmeier-Wurfel said Michigan researchers could find less than two pages on it in Chinese literature.

Linsmeier-Wurfel said there are no firm plans yet on how and where to build the firebreak around the 2,500-square-mile core infested region near Detroit, though one federal official privately said it likely would have to be at least 3 miles wide.

State law allows Michigan to order the destruction of infested trees, and Linsmeier-Wurfel said most in Michigan

***It's analogous to mad cow disease. If you find an infected cow, you destroy the whole herd.***

— Therese Poland,  
Research Entomologist, U.S. Forest Service

are resigned to the sacrifice they must make to keep the pest from spreading.

"Nobody likes to see the trees go, but for the most part there is support because there is an understanding that if something isn't done now, it will just get that much worse," she said.

Researchers are working on insecticides to combat the bug, and early data shows that some are effective at wiping out about 85% of a population. That isn't good enough to eradicate the beetle. But it may offer hope for some homeowners in

the core infested area around Detroit, where officials believe the tally of dead trees could soon reach 12 million.

It is already an ugly scene.

"It's like the old Dutch elm disease days, with rows and rows of dead ash in the urban areas," said Cummings-Carlson of the Wisconsin DNR.

### Identification, Appearance and Symptoms

The emerald ash borer belongs to a group of insects known as metallic wood-boring beetles. Adults are dark metallic green in color, one-half inch in length and one-sixteenth inch wide and are present only from mid-May until late July. Larvae are creamy white in color and are found under the bark.

The borer's host range is limited to species of ash trees (identified by their distinctive leaves, which are located directly across from each other on the leaf stem and bark). In Michigan, most ash trees are white, black or green. Emerald ash borer does not attack mountain ash, which is not related to white, black or green ash trees.

Usually the borers' presence goes undetected until the trees show symptoms of infestation — typically the upper third of a tree will die back first, followed by the rest the next year. This is often followed by a large number of shoots or sprouts arising below the dead portions of the trunk.

The adult beetles typically make a D-shaped exit hole when they emerge. Tissue produced by the tree in response to larval feeding may also cause vertical splits to occur in the bark. Distinct S-shaped tunnels may also be apparent under the bark.

(Editor's Note: For more information, see [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info). This article was reprinted with permission from the Feb. 22, 2004 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.)

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***"We have come up with three truck loads of stuff, from old engine blocks to transmissions (well-drained) to old fencing to steel 55 gal. drums to used bed knives and reels. At \$.15/lb. we get about \$100 for each load."***

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