

Emerald Ash Borer and You

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is an introduced pest into the United States that has the potential to wipe out the vast majority of ash trees in this country. It has already devastated tens of millions of trees in the Midwest, is spreading rapidly on its own and by human action, and was found last year in Boulder. In Colorado, it is an open question whether EAB can move on its own from city to city, as the treeless distances in between cities make natural movement difficult.

As of 2014, here in southeast Aurora there is no need to treat your tree for EAB, for two reasons.

1. Current understanding and treatment protocols indicate there is no need to treat a tree until the pest is within 5-10 miles of your home; that is: treatments on trees that are far from known infestations are unnecessary. If the EAB moves in Colorado as it has elsewhere, it will not be found in Aurora for several more years. Always use an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) – Certified Arborist or Registered Consulting Arborist to diagnose and work on your trees – a list of companies licensed to do work in Aurora is found here: <http://aurora4biz.org/ArboristLicense/MyProjects/Home.aspx?MyProjects=1>
2. The consensus of research finds that if your ash tree is less than 8 inches diameter at breast height (DBH - 54 inches above ground), it is more economical to replace the tree with another (non-ash) tree, as it will be necessary to treat the tree every 1-2 years in perpetuity and the cumulative total for treatment will be more than the benefits the tree provides. Almost all ash trees in the Conservatory are less than 8 inches DBH, and for this reason the Metro District will not pay for treatment of ash in common areas and will gradually replace the ash trees in the District.

Lastly, homeowners should know that certain retail soil drench products to treat EAB contain a chemical – Imidacloprid – that is likely fatal to bees. The urban forestry community currently is divided as to whether bees visit ash trees – studies from the 1960s on hives found ash pollen in some bee hive honey, whereas some more recent observational studies do not find bees foraging on ash flowers. With the crash in bee populations worldwide, extreme caution is warranted when considering whether to use a soil drench product with Imidacloprid.

Keep yourself informed on the status of EAB. Use caution when a company approaches you in the near future with scare stories about EAB – having all the facts will allow you to decide whether paying for treatment is the best option. If the EAB is not in Aurora and your tree is less

than about 8 inches DBH, there should be an excellent reason for you to spend money on EAB treatment.

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Additional Resources:

Colo State Forest Service EAB quick guide: http://cherryhillsvillage.com/resources/1/CSFS_EAB_QuickGuide.pdf

Identification and diagnosis: http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/Emerald_borer.pdf

Information and control options: <http://bspm.agsci.colostate.edu/files/2014/02/EAB-control-options-February-11.pdf>

Colo Dept of Agriculture EAB tracking and management zones: http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/ag_Plants/CBON/1251646251641

City of Boulder tip sheet for hiring companies to treat EAB: <https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/eab-faqs-1-201404171311.pdf>

City of Boulder EAB pesticide recommendations (including Imidacloprid prohibition on city property and recommendation to not be used on private property): <https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/pesticide-options-emerald-ash-borer-1-201404221607.pdf>

Emerald Ash Borer University – for professionals but very accessible: http://www.emeraldashborer.info/eab_university_ondemand.cfm#sthash.7D7gFHKc.dpbs