

## Your Ash Tree vs. the Emerald Ash Borer

A message from the Swampscott Tree Committee

The Ash tree is native to eastern North America and is commonly found in Massachusetts, both in forests and urban environments. Unfortunately, the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect native to a number of Asian countries, began attacking Ash trees in the state in 2012 and now has been detected in 239 communities including several in Essex County.

### ***Do you have Ash trees on your property?***

Look for these three identifying characteristics:

1. Ash trees have compound leaves, each leaf has between 5 and 11 toothed oval leaflets paired along the leaf stem, with the top leaflet pointing upward.
2. The bark of mature Ash trees has a diamond shaped pattern. Note however that young trees' bark is smooth.
3. Ash tree branches grow directly across from (opposite) each other (see photo):



### ***What is the Emerald Ash Borer?***

The adult emerald ash borer is dark green metallic colored beetle about ½-inch long. It emerges in May and June. It's larvae feed on the tree tissue beneath the bark and can cause considerable damage to the tree. You can find photos of the ash borer and tree damage on the internet. The insect can be present in your tree for 3-5 years before significant signs of infestation appear. If your tree is infested, you may see D-shaped exit holes in the bark, tunnels under the bark where larvae have fed, dieback of the upper part of the tree canopy, and sprouting at the tree base. Ultimately, the ash borer will kill 99% of the Ash trees it infests. The adult ash borer looks like this:



If you do identify the ash borer on your property, you should report it on the Emerald Ash Borer Reporting Form at the [massnrc.org](http://massnrc.org) web site.

***What can you do to protect your Ash tree?***

Several insecticide products are available to homeowners to control the emerald ash borer. These products are expensive, need to be reapplied regularly, and have been shown to be less effective for larger trees and for trees that already have been infested or are in otherwise poor health. You may want to work with a professional arborist to determine how to protect your Ash trees.

***What to do with the wood if you take down an infected Ash tree?***

It is very important not to transport infected wood outside the immediate site, to keep the ash borer from infecting a whole new area. A tree company can remove the wood or turn the wood into mulch that you can use in your yard. If you have a fireplace, you can also burn the Ash wood. Remember to keep the Ash tree wood as close to its original location as possible.

9/2022