

# Emerald Ash Borer Setting its Sights on Florida!

By Larry Figart, Urban Forestry Agent

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first detected in the United States near Detroit in the summer of 2002. Since then it has marched into 21 states with Georgia being the last state added after EAB's were



Photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

detected in DeKalb and Fulton Counties in July.

The Emerald Ash Borer not native to the United States, it is native to Asia. It probably came to the US as a stowaway on a ship or plane tucked away in solid wood packing material such as a pallet

or crate.

So far this beetle has killed tens of millions of ash trees in southeastern Michigan alone, with tens of millions more lost in Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Quebec, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

While the adult EAB may chew on a few ash leaves, the larvae are the real killers that mine and eat through the inner bark of ash trees, disrupting the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients.

Signs of emerald ash borer infestation include a general decline in the appearance of the tree, thinning of upper branches and twigs, loss of leaves, and serpentine tunnels produced by EAB larvae un-

der the bark. The exit holes of the emerging adults are a characteristic "D" shape. Woodpeckers may often be observed removing the bark of infested trees to access the larvae.

You may wonder how this beetle has spread so fast. We know EAB adults can fly at least 1/2 mile from the tree where they emerge. Many infestations, however, were started when people moved infested ash nursery trees, logs, or firewood into uninfested areas. There is a law in Florida enacted in 2010 that states that wood cannot be transported within 50 miles of where it originated. It was created in response to invasive wood boring pests such as the EAB.

The effect that this pest could have on Florida is mind blowing. There are four species of ash in Florida; white ash, pop ash, green ash, and pumpkin ash. All four are host for EAB.

There have been several control methods developed for EAB on urban landscape trees. They involve spraying onto, or injecting pesticides into high value ash trees. Research is being done to try and find a way to treat forested areas for EAB, but at this point no solution has been discovered. For more information go to: [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info).



Galleries under the bark and classic "D" shaped exit hole. Photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University

## Green Ash by Larry Figart

The Green Ash is a somewhat irregularly-shaped tree when young becoming an oval with age. It will reach a height of about 60 feet with a spread of 45 feet.

The glossy dark green foliage will turn yellow in the fall, but we rarely see it here in Florida unless our fall is cool and sunny.

This fast growing tree requires full sun, but will adapt to many different landscape conditions and can be grown on wet or dry sites, preferring moist. In the forests, Florida Green ash is found on moist, rich, well-drained soils in association with other hardwoods. It is also found in bottomlands near streams and often on low slopes. It is a common tree seen when tubing down the Itchetucknee River.

Green Ash branches are oppositely arranged and naturally develops co-dominant stems that require regular pruning when it is young to develop a nice

central trunk. The seeds are called samaras and have a single "wing". The seeds are commonly formed in clumps of 20-80 seeds.

Ash wood in general is most famous for being the wood used in the manufacturing of *Louisville Slugger*® baseball bats. It is also used for tool and axe handles because it is tough and does not break very easily.

The seeds of the white ash are an important food source for a variety of birds including red-winged blackbird, evening grosbeak, pine grosbeak, and purple finch. Additionally, beavers often use young white ash for food.



Photo by Alicia Lamborn