

# Managing ash trees on private property

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an introduced insect pest that attacks and kills all species of ash trees in North America.

## ***Trees affected by EAB***

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) only affects ash trees. This includes all trees in the genus *Fraxinus*, including common species such as:

- white ash (*Fraxinus americana*)
- green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)
- black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*)
- European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

as well as less-common species, including:

- Pumpkin ash (*Fraxinus profunda*)
- Blue ash (*Fraxinus quadrangulata*)

## ***Where ash trees grow***

Ash trees are common in both urban and natural settings.

Green ash trees are common street and park trees, and can often be found in floodplain or lowland areas in forests and swamps. Green ash are also common in residential yards.

White ash trees can be found in parks and are also common in upland forested areas. They often grow in the same environments as sugar maple and beech trees. They can also be found in residential yards.

Other species of ash can also be found in various environments, although pumpkin and blue ash are not found in New Tecumseth.

## ***Trees not affected by EAB***

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) does not affect any other types of trees except true ash trees. Trees with similar characteristics (such as leaf shape or bark) to ash, but which are not affected by EAB, may include:

- Black walnut
- Hickories
- Manitoba maple (or boxelder)
- Mountain-ash

## ***How to identify ash trees***

Ash trees (genus *Fraxinus*) have certain characteristics which make them easily identifiable.

Ash trees (especially older ones) usually have tight, rough and diamond-patterned **bark**. Their **twigs** are stout, and are arranged directly opposite of each other along branches. **Leaves** are compound, with a long stem and between five and eleven finely-toothed leaflets. **Seeds** are oar-shaped and hang down in clusters. Unlike walnut, hickory or other trees, ash trees do not form large nuts or other fruit.

Ash trees may sometimes be confused with Manitoba maple (boxelder), walnut or hickory trees. EAB does not affect these or any other tree species except true ash trees.

**If you are considering any management of your privately-owned trees, please be sure to first correctly identify the tree species.**

Identification tips, including photographs, can be found [here](#).

## ***Management options for privately-owned ash trees***

As Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) spreads throughout Ontario, you may need to consider some type of management if you have an ash tree or ash trees on your property.

If you wish to protect your tree against EAB, you may consider treating it with a stem-injectable insecticide. Currently, three insecticide products are available and registered for use in Canada to protect ash trees against EAB. These include AceCap 97, Confidor 200SL, and TreeAzin. Use of these products should be left to tree care professionals.

If you choose not to protect your ash tree, you may wish to plan for its removal and replacement. Remember, you do not need to pre-emptively remove your ash tree before it is infested, but you should consider removal once EAB signs and symptoms are visible. Ash trees in natural forests may not need to be removed at all, and may provide valuable wildlife habitat and forest nutrients once killed by EAB.

You should also consider replacing any removed ash trees with large-growing, native shade trees. This will ensure that the many valuable benefits provided by ash trees, such as shading, air quality improvement, and aesthetics, are protected and sustained.

Before undertaking any management of your ash trees, **please consult a tree management professional** such as an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) Consulting Arborist, or Ontario Registered Professional Forester (RPF). A tree management professional will be able to provide with you with the best information to help you make the right decision for your ash tree or trees. You can also use the [Canadian Forest Service Ash Protection Model \(CFS-APM\)](#) to help you determine if protecting your ash tree is economical.

### ***Measuring tree trunk diameter (DBH)***

If you are considering protecting your ash tree against EAB, the dosage of insecticide applied (and the cost) will depend upon the diameter of the tree trunk. Tree trunk diameter, also known as diameter at breast height (DBH), is measured 1.4 m above grade.

Your tree care professional can easily measure your tree's trunk diameter, but you may wish to measure it yourself if you are seeking a quotation over the telephone or by email.

To easily measure tree trunk diameter without specialized tools or equipment, you will need:

- A measuring tape (metallic or vinyl)
- Calculator
- Optional: A sturdy piece of string or twine (if using metallic measuring tape or meter stick)
- Optional: A push-pin or thumb tack (for larger trees)

To measure the diameter of your tree:

- Measure and visually mark a spot on the tree trunk 1.4 m (about 4 ½ feet) above ground level.
- Measure the circumference around the trunk (like measuring your waist) with the measuring tape or string. You may need to pin one end of the tape or string to the tree trunk while measuring, if the trunk is too large to wrap your arms around.
- Use a calculator to divide the circumference (number on tape or length of string around the tree) by  $\pi$  (3.1416). The resulting number is the tree's diameter at breast height, or DBH.

For example, a mid-sized ash tree might have a measured trunk circumference of 94.2 cm (37 inches). Its diameter will be approximately 30 cm (12 inches). If your tree has more than one stem, you can determine the diameter of each stem individually and tell these numbers to the tree care professional.

### ***Why hire a tree care/management professional***

An **arborist** is a professional with specific knowledge of tree biology and physiology, and with experience in arboriculture, which is the cultivation, study and management of individual trees.

A **Registered Professional Forester (RPF)** is a registered professional with similar knowledge, and with experience and knowledge about forestry, which is the cultivation, study and management of groups of trees (forests) and forest ecosystems.

Depending upon the size and nature of your tree(s) or property, you should consider consulting one of these tree care and management experts before undertaking any management of ash trees on your property. If you are considering protecting your ash tree against EAB using Confidor 200SL or TreeAzin, you will require the services of a licensed tree care professional to apply these products.

#### *Individual Trees or a Small Group of Trees*

If you are managing an individual tree or a group of trees, you should hire an arborist. Tree work can be very dangerous, and requires the application of specific skills and knowledge to assess and minimize risk, and to ensure that the appropriate treatments (such as pruning, injection or removal) are undertaken. If you hire an arborist, make sure they have the appropriate qualifications. The tree care industry is not regulated, but many arborists choose to become certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), a non-profit professional organization. ISA Certified Arborists must demonstrate their knowledge and skill through a written examination and continuing education. An ISA Certified Arborist is also expected to abide by the Certified Arborist Code of Ethics. Please note, however, that certification with the ISA is not a guarantee of performance.

An arborist may also be a member of the Ontario Commercial Arborist Association (OCAA), Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) or other industry membership organizations.

#### *A Forest Property*

If you are managing a forest property, you should hire a professional forester. Forestry, like Engineering, Architecture or many other professions, is regulated by the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA), under the *Ontario Professional Foresters Act, 2000*. A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) can advise forest owners on timber harvesting, tree planting, recreational planning and wildlife habitat management, and can provide specific advice about ash tree management in relation to Emerald Ash Borer. As with arborist certification, an RPF must demonstrate his or her knowledge through a written examination, experience requirements, and continuing education. A Registered Professional Forester is also governed by a Code of Ethics. Please note, however, that membership and registration with the OPFA is not a guarantee of performance.

### ***What questions to ask a tree care/management professionals***

To ensure that you are hiring a qualified, experienced and skilled tree care or management professional, you should ask several questions. If the contractor cannot answer these questions, you should consider engaging the services of a different tree care or management professional.

- Are you ISA, ASCA, or OPFA certified/registered? If so, what is your certification/registration number?
- How long have you been in the profession?
- Do you have liability insurance, Workers Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage, and/or equivalent insurance coverage? (Note that home insurance does not usually cover contractors performing work on-site)
- Will you be able to provide me with a copy of your WSIB clearance certificate and insurance coverage if we move forward with the proposed work?
- Are your crew members (if applicable) certified/registered and/or trained?
- Can you provide references for similar work?
- Can you provide a written cost estimate, and do you charge for an estimate?
- Are there any hidden costs/fees not included in the estimate (e.g., materials, clean-up)?
- Does someone from the household need to be on-site while works are performed?
- What are they payment terms?

If possible, you should seek out at least two or three quotations from different tree care or management providers.