Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation
- Emerald Ash Borer Management Statement -

www.emeraldashborer.info/files/conserve_ash.pdf

signed 06 Jan 2011

We the undersigned strongly endorse ash tree conservation as a fundamental component of integrated programs to manage emerald ash borer (EAB) in residential and municipal landscapes. Cost-effective, environmentally sound EAB treatment protocols are now available that can preserve ash trees through peak EAB outbreaks with healthy canopy intact. Used in association with tree inventories and strategic removal / replacement of unhealthy ash, tree conservation will help retain maximum integrity and value of urban forests. This integrated approach to urban EAB management is supported by university scientists with expertise in EAB management, commercial arborists, municipal foresters, public works officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees since its discovery in 2002 and the number of dead ash is increasing rapidly. Ash species are abundant in planted *and* natural areas of urban forests, representing 10 - 40% of the canopy cover in many communities.

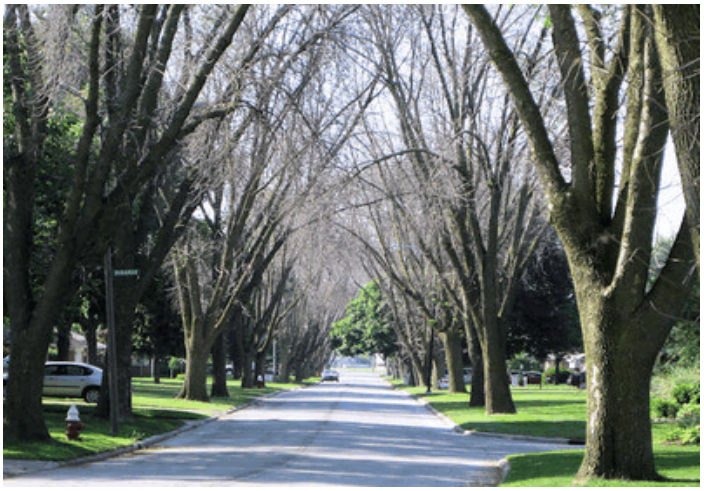
Ash trees provide substantial economic and ecosystem benefits to taxpayers, ranging from increased property value, to storm water mitigation, to decreased energy demands (http://www.coloradotrees.org/benefits.htm).

Consequently, widespread ash mortality in urban forests and residential landscapes is having devastating economic and environmental impacts. Indeed, EAB is predicted to cause an unprecedented $10-20 *billion* in losses to urban forests over the next 10 years. (http://ncrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/jrnl/2010/nrs_2010_kovacs_001.pdf)

After its initial discovery, regulatory agencies attempted to eradicate EAB through removal and destruction of all ash trees in infested areas. Unfortunately, this proved unsuccessful and was soon abandoned.

Since then, university scientists have developed and refined treatment protocols that can protect healthy ash trees from EAB and help conserve the urban forest.

Ash trees before EAB devastation -- Belvedere Dr., Toledo, OH, June 2006.



Untreated ash trees after EAB peak, Belvedere Dr., Toledo, OH, June 2009.

However, despite availability of cost-effective treatments, many municipalities, property managers, and homeowners continue to rationalize tree removal as the only viable management strategy for EAB. This is based on erroneous beliefs that tree removal slows the spread of EAB, or that treatment is not effective, economical, or environmentally sound. *Current science supports conservation via treatment as a sensible and effective tool for managing healthy ash trees in urban settings. In many cases, tree conservation is economically and environmentally superior to tree removal.*

Based on research conducted by university scientists, and careful review of the potential impacts on human health and the environment, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has registered three systemic insecticides for control of EAB – dinotefuran is registered for basal trunk bark or soil application, emamectin benzoate for trunk injection only, and imidacloprid for soil application or trunk injection.

When applied *using formulations, products, and protocols documented as effective by university research,* these treatments can provide environmentally sound control of EAB, sufficient to maintain a functional and aesthetically pleasing ash canopy.

Treatment is most appropriate *after* EAB infestation has been detected within 15 miles, and is most effective when applied before trees are infested. However, treatment can also save ash trees with a low level of EAB infestation. Spring is the ideal time for treatment, but soil application in fall can be effective in some situations.

Different treatment regimens will be optimal under different situations *-- no one treatment plan or application method is best under all circumstances.*

A program of sustained treatment will be needed to conserve trees through peak EAB infestation. However, as the local EAB population declines due to death of untreated ash, it is possible that treatment frequency may be reduced. Research on this question and other aspects of EAB management is ongoing, *requiring practitioners to stay current.*

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In summary, urban ash conservation can be less costly than removal, especially when the significant environmental and economic benefits of established trees are considered (www.treebenefits.com, http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/treecomputer/). Furthermore, ash conservation can circumvent the substantial environmental impacts caused by wholesale deforestation of the urban landscape, as well as the documented public safety risks associated with standing dead ash trees and their removal.

-- Signed - 06 Jan 2011 --

Jim Bell, Parks Superintendent
City of Elgin, IL

Shawn Bernick, Director of Research *
Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements

Joe Boggs, Asst. Prof.
OSU Extension / OSU Dept. of Entomology
The Ohio State University

J. Bradford Bonham, DVM *
Municipal consultant (OH)

Joe Chamberlin, PhD; Development Mgr, SE
Valent U.S.A. Corporation

Richard S. Cowles, PhD
Agricultural Scientist
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Mike Galvin, Deputy Director *~
Casey Trees, Washington, DC

Larry Hanks, Consulting Arborist *~
Pampered Properties, Georgetown, KY

Daniel A. Herms, PhD
Prof., Dept. of Entomology
The Ohio State University; Wooster, OH

Ray Iacobucci, Regional Technical Manager
TruGreen; Lewis Center, OH

Dana Irwin, Sr. Director - East Svc. Delivery
Scotts LawnService

Deborah G. McCullough, PhD
Prof., Depts. of Entomology and Forestry
Michigan State University; E. Lansing, MI

Fredric Miller, PhD ^
Prof., Horticulture
Joliet Junior College; Joliet, IL

Michael J. Raupp, PhD
Prof. & Ext. Specialist, Dept. of Entomology
University of Maryland; College Park, MD

Michael Robinson, VP; Mgr. Midwest Div. *
The F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company

Clifford S. Sadof, PhD
Prof., Entomology
Purdue University; West Lafayette, IN

Craig Schaar, Forestry Inspector *
City of Toledo, OH

David Smitley, PhD
Prof., Dept. of Entomology
Michigan State University; E. Lansing, MI

Chad Tinkel, Manager, Forestry Operations *
City of Ft. Wayne, IN

Chris Williamson, PhD
Assoc. Prof., Dept. of Entomology
University of Wisconsin; Madison, WI

James Zwack, Dir. Technical Services
The Davey Tree Expert Company

**ISA-certified arborist*
^ ISA Board-Certified Master Arborist
~ASCA Registered Consulting Arborist

Standing dead ash, Belvedere Dr., Toledo, OH.

Curbside ash removed due to EAB, Belvedere Dr.

Ash trees under treatment, Lake Forest, IL, 2010.