



Recommendations for Emerald Ash Borer Response in Washington Communities

What is Emerald Ash Borer, and how does it impact our urban forests?

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB; *Agrilus planipennis*) is an exotic, invasive forest pest that has decimated ash tree populations across North America and whose presence is now [confirmed in the PNW](#), specifically in Forest Grove, Oregon. It is estimated that EAB populations are often present in forests for 3-5 years before detection. This pest has not yet been detected in Washington, but it will cause significant impacts on Washington's urban forests when it arrives. Emerald Ash Borer attacks trees in the *Oleaceae* family, with the most susceptible hosts being Ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), and also including Olive (*Olea europaea*) and white fringe trees (*Chionanthus virginicus*) with mortality rates of 99 percent in most ash species.

Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) is Washington's only native ash tree species. Oregon ash is a critical species to wetland and riparian areas, serving integral roles in these sensitive and valuable ecosystems by cooling water temperatures through shade and providing native fish habitat. This species is important to many indigenous communities. Oregon ash is predominantly found in southwest Washington. Parks and natural areas are the highest priority with this species.

There are many other non-native ash (*Fraxinus*) species planted as ornamental shade trees in parks, yards, and along streets. Commonly planted non-native ash include, but are not limited to, green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), narrow leaf ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*), and European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

The [Pest Readiness Playbook](#) is a tool that was designed to prepare communities for outbreaks of invasive species just like Emerald Ash Borer through self-assessments and follow-up actions to improve readiness in each municipality's unique scenario. Washington's goal is to slow the spread of Emerald Ash Borer by taking proactive steps and being prepared by utilizing the tools available.

What can my municipality, campus, or non-profit do?

1. Field Operations for Ash Management
 - a. Stop planting ash (*Fraxinus*) trees
 - i. Additionally, remove ash (*Fraxinus*) species from all tree planting lists
 - b. Limit maintenance of current ash trees to only what is necessary for public safety
2. Staff Training
 - a. Monitor trees through regular inspection cycles for Emerald Ash Borer
 - i. Gain proficiency in [identifying ash trees](#)
 - ii. Learn to [identify Emerald Ash Borer](#)
 - iii. Become familiar with the [signs and symptoms of EAB infestation](#)
 - b. Ensure at least one staff member holds a [Washington State Pesticide License](#)
 - c. Reporting and Initial Response
 - i. Report to [Washington Invasive Species Council](#)
 - ii. Report to [APHIS](#) or call 1-866-322-4512

- iii. Quarantine infested wood
- 3. Tree Inventory – you can't manage what you don't know you have
 - a. Identify pockets of dense ash populations and visualize impacts of EAB
 - b. Prioritize ash trees most suitable for treatment by considering which trees are most significant to the community and/or provide the most ecosystem services
 - c. Financial planning – understand the costs and benefits associated [with treatment vs. removal/replacement](#), and with wood recycling methods effective for reducing the spread of EAB
 - i. Estimate [costs for treating](#) priority trees
 - ii. Calculate [costs for removal and replacement](#) of remaining ash populations
 - iii. Explore budget and strategies for wood recycling and wood waste management by networking with nearby cities and counties
 - iv. Document this process to help prepare RFPs and contracts in the event of an outbreak
- 4. Tree Ordinances
 - a. Review current tree ordinances with consideration for the proactive removal of susceptible host tree species, and the removal of dead or dying trees in respect to
 - i. ease and accessibility for property owners that maintain trees on private property, and/or maintain trees on public rights-of-way,
 - ii. authority of local jurisdictions for trees on publicly managed lands and trees that threaten public property, and
 - iii. guidance for replacement of all removed trees with non-host tree species.
- 5. Raise Awareness in surrounding areas by coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions - Your preparedness only goes as far as your neighbor's preparedness
- 6. Become Familiar with the [Pest Readiness Playbook](#)
 - a. Work through self-assessments
 - b. Identify community-specific readiness actions
 - c. Option to create pest-specific response plans
- 7. Maintain Healthy Urban Tree Canopy – the loss of ash will impact overall canopy
 - a. Tree diversity is key to healthy urban forests.
 - i. Avoid planting monocultures
 - ii. Improve non-ash tree species diversity
 - b. Preserve existing tree canopy through improving the health of non-ash species
 - i. [Mulch around your trees](#)
 - ii. Reduce stressors such as [soil compaction](#), and [construction impacts](#)
 - iii. Limit changes to hydrology. Consider irrigation if necessary. Infrequent, deep watering will encourage drought tolerance

What can I do as an individual?

[Don't move firewood](#). Buy firewood where you burn it, and burn it where you buy it.

More Information:

- [Emerald Ash Borer Information Network](#)
- [DNR Tree Link: Pest Readiness Playbook](#)
- [Washington Invasive Species Council: Emerald Ash Borer](#)
- [Oregon's Readiness and Response Plan](#)