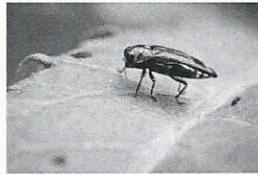


# Invaders of the Lost Ash?



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The Emerald Ash Borer, *Agrilus planipennis*, heretofore abbreviated as EAB, is a cambium-eating, wood-boring pest of ash trees. This Asian invader was first noticed in Michigan in 2002 and has since spread to 33 states, leaving millions of dead ash trees in its path. That path has generally followed major interstate highways, so when EAB was detected near I-30 in southwest Arkansas in 2014, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas A&M Forest Service took action. Purple traps were hung in trees all over northeast Texas, including here in Tarrant County.

While these traps were responsible for catching the first beetles found in Texas—in Harrison County near Karnack in April 2016—here in Tarrant County, the first EAB was caught on camera in the summer of 2017 by 10-year-old Tarrant County resident Sam Hunt and posted on the social network site, iNaturalist.com.

The photo of the shiny green beetle got lost among the 14, 941, 365 observations to date on iNaturalist until July 2018 when it came to the attention of Sam Kieschnick, Texas Parks and Wildlife Urban Biologist. The search was on near Eagle Mountain Lake and in December 2018, the presence of EAB was confirmed at a site near the dam. This is very close to the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge, home to many native ash trees.

There are 16 native ash species in the United States, but only eight of those are native to Texas. Here in Tarrant County, our native ashes are *Fraxinus albicans*, Texas Ash, *F. americana*, White Ash, and *F. pennsylvanica*, Green Ash. All are usually found along streams and rivers or planted in landscapes. There are also a significant number of Arizona Ash trees planted in Tarrant County land-

scapes. This desert species was especially popular during the late 70s and in the 80s but has fallen out of favor due to its relatively short lifespan and is sometimes referred to as “Arizona Trash.” That’s a bit harsh.

How do you know if you have an ash tree in your landscape? Ashes are one of a limited number of tree species that have opposite leaf arrangement combined with compound leaves. There are many other trees in north Texas with compound leaves, but pecans, hickories, walnuts, Chinese pistaches and soapberries all show the much more common alternate leaf attachment. Ash seeds are also very distinctive. Shaped like little canoe paddles, the samaras (winged achenes) hang in clusters and often remain on the tree until late fall or early winter.

If you do have an ash you’d like to protect from EAB, there are several effective insecticide options. Treatment is recommended if EAB has been identified within 15 miles. What happens to untreated trees? In other states all untreated ash trees in an invaded area have died within 10 years of the initial invasion. Will there be any ashes in Tarrant County in 2028? Perhaps we can learn from the experience of others and prevent the loss of ash from our urban forest.

Read more about EAB at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/eab/>.

Commercial and Municipal arborists can learn more about EAB from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Entomologist and Texas A&M Forest Service Regional Forest Health Coordinator Allen Smith at the 2019 North Central Texas Urban Forestry Conference in Arlington on February 13, 2019. <http://ctufc.org/>.