

Throughout this past summer, I received several questions about trees and every once in a while I would receive questions specifically about Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). EAB is a beetle that is very destructive to ash trees that was first discovered in the United States near Detroit, Michigan in 2002. Ever since then, it has spread throughout the Northeast. Thankfully, to date, the closest to North Dakota EAB has been detected is in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. I am thankful that people are on the lookout for EAB because ash trees are the most popular trees planted in North Dakota.

Here is what you need to look for if you suspect an ash tree may have EAB. The adult beetles are no longer than a penny and have a metallic blue/green shell. Although the adult EAB beetles do eat the leaves from ash trees, it is the EAB larva that is most destructive. The larva will burrow inside the tree bark, preventing the tree from being able to absorb water and nutrients which ultimately causes the ash tree to die. The larva are white and can grow up to 1 ¼ inches long. If you peel the bark from an ash tree, there will be “S” pattern burrow marks from the larva. The larva also leave “D” shaped exit holes on the surface of the tree bark about the size of a pen tip. Some of the signs that an ash tree might have EAB are the onset of excess sprouting or suckers, split bark, die back from the top down, and extensive woodpecker damage since woodpeckers are attracted to the larva. It is important to note that EAB can be difficult to identify since several insects and diseases can mimic EAB. If you suspect EAB but are not sure, make sure to consult with an expert.

EAB beetles can fly and will spread this way, but the main way EAB has been spread is from the movement of firewood. If you plan to go camping or have a wood burning fireplace, make sure to follow the saying “burn it where you buy it”. By preventing the movement of infested firewood, the spread of EAB can be greatly reduced. If you have any questions, please contact the Extension office at 701-524-2253 or [alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu](mailto:alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu). NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.