

# MY ASH TREES ARE DYING...

## WHAT DO I DO?



### First Steps in Addressing Dying Trees

Tens of millions of ash trees have been killed by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the Midwestern and Eastern states. Consequently, this leaves homeowners wondering what to do with the ash trees in their yards and woodlots. Studies have shown that there is 99% mortality of ash trees within 3-4 years of emerald ash borer infestation.

There are several options for landowners to consider when dealing with dead or dying ash trees:

**Option 1: Cut It Down**

**Option 2: Treat it**

**Option 3: Leave It Alone**

**OPTION 1 – Cut it Down: CAUTION: CUTTING ASH TREES YOURSELF IS VERY DANGEROUS**

- The first sign of EAB is dead and dying tops. EAB infests and feeds on the top of the tree first. Tops that are dead are known as “widow makers” because they can break and fall unexpectedly when cut. Declining and dead ash is VERY dangerous to cut for this reason.
- Ash is an excellent firewood, but please use caution when cutting. To help slow the spread of EAB, don’t move firewood. Buy it local and burn it where you buy it.
- If you only have a few hazard trees to remove around the yard, hire a reliable, insured, licensed arborist/tree service company. Consider joining with your neighbors to hire a single company for a large group of tree removals to cut costs.
- Before hiring a company, obtain: Estimates from multiple companies, proof of insurance, written estimates of cost, written agreement on disposal/ site cleanup requirements, and references.



## OPTION 2— TREAT IT

**There are insecticide treatment options if you would like to save important trees in your yard.**

- For most homeowners, treatment is not feasible on a larger landscape level, but can be used to prevent single tree mortality if the trees are still healthy. (less than 25% die back in the canopy)
- Keep in mind that controlling insects that feed under the bark with insecticides has always been difficult and will require treatment for several years. This can be costly and time consuming.
- Insecticides that can effectively control EAB fall into four categories:
  - (1) systemic insecticides that are applied as soil injections or drenches;
  - (2) systemic insecticides applied as trunk injections;
  - (3) systemic insecticides applied as lower trunk sprays; and
  - (4) protective cover sprays that are applied to the trunk, main branches, and foliage.
- Some insecticides are marketed for use by homeowners while others are intended for use only by professional applicators.
- Ultimately, the best option may be to consult with a professional applicator (foresters, arborists, etc.) on whether or not to treat your ash and what to treat them with.



## OPTION 3—LEAVE IT ALONE - You do not have to treat or remove dead or dying trees.

- If your dead tree is located in your yard or along a street, it will likely pose a hazard over time and should be removed immediately. However, when left standing in a woodlot, these trees provide excellent wildlife habitat, creating sheltered cavities for mammals, nesting sites for birds, and structure for a variety of other organisms.
- However, **SAFETY is a top priority** — if you think that the tree could be a hazard for you or others, please be safe and remove it.

**Ultimately, the decisions regarding your ash trees are yours as a landowner. You can cut trees, treat them, or leave them alone as wildlife habitat. A combination of the three may be the best tool for managing your landscape.**

