

EMERALD ASH BORER

The story of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) started in 2002 when it was discovered near Detroit, Michigan, thought to have entered the United States through packing material from Asia. The EAB is a metallic green beetle native to Asia that rapidly spread across the United States and Canada, devastating ash tree populations. EAB larvae feed under the bark and disrupt the tree's ability to transport nutrients and water, killing infected ash trees.

As with the unintended introduction of a harmful invasive species, the first response is to find a method to eliminate the species. After EAB eradication failed, a program was developed to slow the spread of EAB and control the damage through insecticide treatments and removal and disposal of infected ash trees.

Since 2002, the impact of the EAB on ash trees has been severe. EAB has killed over forty million ash trees in Michigan. Some areas have seen up to 99% mortality.

There is a promising natural solution to the EAB problem that involves the introduction of non-stinging wasps. Originally found native to Asia and Russia, these wasps are tiny and lay eggs on EAB larvae ultimately killing them. This method of biological control began in 2007 and has been successful in several areas of the United States including Michigan, Ohio, and Maryland. This is a promising tool for long-term management of EAB populations in conjunction with other control measures.

Several organizations are currently researching the reproduction of an EAB resistant ash tree as a long-term solution to EAB infestations.

