



## Emerald Ash Borer – 2013 Georgia Update

The invasive beetle emerald ash borer (EAB) was recently discovered in Georgia. The following information details Georgia's ash resources, the potential impact of their loss, and facts that will help landowners understand their options in dealing with this pest.

### Status in Georgia

- EAB was discovered in Georgia in July 2013 as part of a national detection survey and trapping program. In 2013, more than 400 traps were placed throughout the state by GFC, GDA and UGA. These traps targeted areas with an increased risk of introduction, such as campgrounds and cargo centers. Traps were also placed in stands with a high ash component. Annual monitoring has taken place in Georgia since 2005.
- EAB has a high risk of being moved in firewood, primarily because EAB develops between the bark and wood of the tree. Most firewood is moved with bark intact, making it a high-risk vector. A campaign to educate campers about the risk of spreading pests in this manner is currently underway throughout Georgia state and private parks. A 13-state campaign has been proposed to develop and disseminate the "Don't Move Firewood" message.

### Ash Resource at Risk in Georgia

- White ash and green ash are the most common ash species found in Georgia. White ash occurs in moist upland or lowland forests, is found in the mountains and piedmont, and produces valuable wood used for furniture, veneer, interior finish, baseball bats, railroad ties, tool handles and fuel. Green ash is found throughout the state, mostly in lowland areas. Its wood is inferior to white ash because it is more brittle and less resilient. However, it is used for some of the same purposes as white ash. Carolina ash, pumpkin ash and blue ash are also found in Georgia, but in lower numbers. All species of North American ash appear to be susceptible to EAB.
- Commercial timber – Georgia has 1.77 million acres of forest land with an ash component. On this acreage, the total stumpage value of ash in Georgia as of August 2013 exceeds \$400 million.
- Urban Trees - About 2.9 million ash trees are found in Georgia's urban and community forests and have a value of \$725 million.

### EAB Basics

- EAB attacks only [ash trees \(\*Fraxinus spp.\*\)](#) and can take three to four years to kill the tree.
- [Adult beetles](#) are metallic green, about one-half -inch long and are strong flyers.
- Adults leave a [D-shaped exit hole in the bark](#) when they emerge in the spring.

- Some larvae take two years to develop. Woodpeckers like [EAB larvae](#); heavy woodpecker damage on ash trees may be a sign of infestation.
- EAB likely came from Asia in wood packing material and was first discovered in Michigan.
- Movement of infested firewood is likely the largest single vector for spreading the emerald ash borer. Quarantines have been established in states with confirmed infestations to stop the spread of the insect through infested wood products. Buy local firewood.
  - Infestations now exist in 21 states with Georgia being the southernmost.
  - Wildlife uses: seeds of ash are eaten by several species of birds. The bark is occasionally eaten by rabbits and beavers. Cavity excavating and nesting birds often use ash.
- Additional information about the pest can be found at [www.gainvasives.org/eab/](http://www.gainvasives.org/eab/); and for firewood movement at [www.dontmovefirewood.org/](http://www.dontmovefirewood.org/).

### **EAB Prevention/Control**

- Certain insecticides can be used for prevention or control of EAB. The insecticide is applied as a protective cover spray, soil treatment, stem injection or bark spray, depending on the type of insecticide used.
- In 2007, scientists introduced three species of parasitic wasps in an attempt to establish a biological control for EAB. This work is ongoing and success is still being evaluated.

If you think you have an EAB infestation, please contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office at <http://www.gatrees.org/about-us/contact-us/>.