

## **Don't Move Firewood – Help Stop the Spread of Emerald Ash Borer**

When a tree dies in the backyard, many homeowners turn it into firewood and take it up to their cottage or give it to a neighbor. Unfortunately, they may also be giving hidden hitchhikers a ride. Alien tree pests and diseases such as emerald ash borer (EAB), gypsy moth and oak wilt are easily transported long distances on firewood. EAB hitchhiked from Asia to Michigan in cargo packing materials and has since killed more than 25 million ash trees. Now an estimated 727 million ash trees in Wisconsin are threatened by this pest hitchhiking its way on firewood from infested states such as Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania or West Virginia. Public care in using firewood is the most effective way to minimize the spread of EAB.

Homeowners can help keep Wisconsin's urban forests healthy by taking a few precautions:

- Leave your firewood at home and obtain it near your cottage or campsite. Wood purchased or gathered from a local source is at low risk of introducing a new pest or disease.
- Don't bring firewood home, especially if you've been out-of-state. In fact, it is now against the law to take firewood of hardwood trees (including ash) out of Illinois, Indiana, lower Michigan, Ohio and parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia because of the risk of transporting EAB. Even if an area is currently not known to have EAB, it may already be there, but undetected.
- Wood that has loose or no bark is safer than wood with tight bark because most insects and diseases that live beneath the bark need it to be tightly attached to the wood. Check each piece though, because gypsy moth egg masses may still be hiding under loose bark.
- Burn all of the firewood that you obtain. Don't bring it home or move to another location.

Wisconsin residents can also help by monitoring their ash trees. If three or more of the following symptoms are observed on any species of ash tree (except mountain ash, which is not a true ash), it should be reported immediately to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection by calling 1-800-462-2803:

- dying branches in the tree canopy
- sprouting on the trunk or at the base of the tree
- splitting bark on the trunk
- increased woodpecker activity
- tiny, D-shaped holes where adult beetles have emerged
- S-shaped trails underneath the bark
- small, bullet-shaped, metallic green beetles present from June to August

For more information on emerald ash borer, visit <http://emeraldashborer.wi.gov>