

HOW TO LEAD AN ASH TREE WALK



PURPOSE

Helping people learn to identify ash trees and the signs and symptoms of emerald ash borer (EAB), encourages individuals and communities to make a plan for their ash trees before EAB arrives. Having a plan beforehand will help save money and protect your community's tree canopy!

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Someone knowledgeable about tree identification
- Means of advertising event (Front Porch Forum, flyers, community calendar, etc.)
- Name tags (optional)
- Handouts on Ash Identification and EAB (Optional, see Resources)
- Ash trees and at least two trees that might be confused with ash



PREPARATION

Find someone who is good at tree identification (maybe that is you).

Notify your tree warden or tree board that you are planning this walk. Ask for their help in advertising the event. You can find their contact information through your town clerk.

Locate a short route in your community that will take people by at least 3-4 different ash trees, and at least two other species that are commonly confused with ash (good candidates include box elder, walnut, and elm). Ash are often planted on downtown streets, on public parks and town greens, and even in parking lots.

Find some ash trees that are healthy and in good shape, and others that may be stressed or in decline.

Identify whether the individual trees are white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) or green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*). (Black ash, *Fraxinus nigra*, prefer wet and swampy areas and are rarely found in urban environments.)

Practice walking the route and make notes about what you want to point out about each tree you will be stopping at.

Advertise two to three weeks before the event. Utilize Front Porch Forum, local newspapers, radio stations and community calendars. Three days before the event send out a reminder. Be sure to include information about what will happen if it is raining.

Optional: You can make a map of the route as a “self-guided” option. [See Branch Out Burlington's website](#) for examples of neighborhood Tree Walk maps.

THE WALK

Meet in front of an ash tree.

Introduce yourself and the purpose of the walk: have participants introduce themselves, (pass out name tags if you use them), [share talking points about emerald ash borer](#) and the [map of confirmed EAB infestation sites](#).

Pass around a couple ash branches, ask people to name something they notice about the branch. Then go over ash tree identification (note if the tree is a green or white ash.)

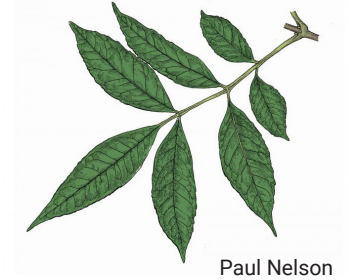


White ash

leaves are larger, back of leaves is whitish, U-shaped leaf scars, bark does not get flaky

Green ash

leaves are smaller, back of leaves is greener, D-shaped leaf scars, bark can get flaky as tree ages



Review Trees Commonly Confused with ash: make sure to include some trees on your walk that may be confused with ash. One you will almost surely be able to find is box elder, which also has opposite branches and compound leaves, but is in the maple family.



Discuss Common Problems of Ash Trees: Once you start looking at ash trees in your community, you will start to see a lot of trees that are looking like they are in decline. Emerald ash borer is just one of many reasons that ash trees may be stressed. Other stressors include:

- Nearby construction
- Root compaction or restriction
- Drought
- Changes in water levels
- Herbicide damage (common along rail lines)
- Wounds to the trunk
- Disease (ash yellows and verticillium wilt)



Review [Signs and Symptoms of emerald ash borer](#) and [Report It!](#). Signs of EAB infestation include:

- Canopy dieback
- Epicormic sprouting
- Larval galleries
- Woodpecker activity



All images courtesy of Bugwood.org

Woodpecker activity is one of the best indicators that there are larvae in the tree. Let people know if you suspect it, Report It! by taking pictures of the tree and clicking on the Report It! button on VTinvasives.org.

RESOURCES

Options for Protecting Ash Trees from EAB with Insecticide Treatments

Did your group identify some spectacular or well-loved ash trees on your walk? They may be worth saving! [Learn more about insecticide treatments at this link](#).

Ash Tree Inventory

If your town has not yet conducted an ash tree inventory, it is important to do one. You can't manage what you do not know you have! Help is available through Vermont's Urban and Community Forestry Program. For an introductory presentation on emerald ash borer to municipalities and community groups, contact Ginger.Nickerson@uvm.edu. Once you have volunteers ready to conduct an inventory, contact Joanne.Garton@Vermont.gov to learn more about conducting an ash inventory in your municipality.

Emerald Ash Borer Management Resources for Municipalities

[Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's website](#) has examples of management plans for municipalities and many other resources!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

VTCOMMUNITYFORESTRY.ORG