

# CHICAGO SUN TIMES- The Naperville Sun

## The biggest myths about Emerald Ash Borer in state

By Jeff Palmer April 14, 2012 1:08AM

Updated: May 20, 2012 8:12AM

Towns throughout Illinois have come to the realization that a tiny invasive insect from Asia has thrown their communities into full blown crisis mode.

The pest known as the Emerald Ash Borer bores into ash trees and compromises their circulatory system which results in death. The Chicago area has millions of ash which will cost billions of dollars to remove and replace over the next five years. Below, I debunk the myths about EAB to help you get ahead of this crisis with the latest facts:

If we cut infected ash quickly, EAB can be contained.

EAB is so prolific that it achieves near 100 percent infestation in a few short years whether you remove infested trees or not. Villages such as Oak Lawn, Geneva, Mount Prospect and many others discovered EAB in their ash trees the last few years, but now most of the ash in their villages are infested. EAB

moves too quickly to contain.

EAB cannot be treated.

Leading EAB scientists published their synthesis of research, which indicates infestations can be controlled when detected and treated at an early stage. Trees with more than 50 percent of their canopy are candidates for treatment. Villages such as Gurnee, Naperville and River Forest and cities such as Chicago aggressively treat ash trees.

It's less costly to cut than to treat.

A parkway tree can be treated for 20 years or more at the same cost as cutting and removing. Loss of shade means higher energy bills in the summer. And, trees comprise 5-7 percent of a home's value. For municipalities, losing hundreds or thousands of trees creates potential flooding

problems because each mature tree holds thousands of gallons of water that will otherwise end up on the streets.

Our village is all over this, we can relax.

Municipalities only look after trees on public land, such as parkways, parks and schools. The vast majority of ash trees are planted on private property; and an infected ash tree is a danger to property and people. The infestation in northeastern Illinois has reached a level whereby it's prudent to evaluate every ash tree (immediately).

There's a natural solution.

There is, but it can't help with the current infestation. Tiny stingless wasps prey on Emerald Ash Borer and are being bred and released. Unfortunately, these wasps live only in wooded areas and take years to reach an effective population. Untreated trees will not survive the wait.

Once I start, treatment continues until the end of time.

The most effective treatment option lasts two years with excellent results. In seven to 10 years, all untreated ash trees will be gone. When this happens, EAB population levels will crash for lack of food which means that treatment intervals can be expanded. It is also possible that science will find alternative methods for ash trees to survive EAB on their own.

OK, I'm doomed.

Only if you ignore the issue. The first step is to evaluate the EAB problem that affects your property. Consult an expert. There's a pretty good chance that you can make a small investment this spring and avoid paying to have your ash trees cut down. And some municipalities, such as Evanston and Mount Prospect, let homeowners treat parkway trees.

Jeff Palmer is a certified arborist and an expert on Emerald Ash Borer.