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Emerald Ash Borer Continues to Spread

Last October we confirmed that the highly invasive and destructive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is in Nemaha County Kansas. Within the last two months, EAB was confirmed present in two more Kansas Counties – Linn County and Pottawatomie County. These discoveries mean 17 counties have confirmed EAB presence. EAB is most likely already spread to other surrounding counties.

Once infected, the Emerald Ash Borer is a death sentence for ash trees unless you treat the tree for the rest of its life. To determine if the EAB is in your tree, look for symptoms on the bark and in the canopy. Woodpeckers eat EAB larvae, so look for light patches of bark and woodpecker holes. The larvae tunnel under the bark and feast on the cambium, the layer just below the bark responsible for water and nutrient movement in the tree. Their feeding can cause splits in the bark with S-shaped tunnels underneath. When the larvae exit the tree, they leave behind small, D-shaped holes about 1/8 of an inch in diameter.

If you notice the EAB in your ash tree, act quickly to save it. Once a tree has lost over 40% of its canopy, the odds of survival even with treatment are very low. Treatments for the EAB include trunk injection, soil drench, or bark spray. These treatments will need to be applied on a regular basis for the rest of the tree's life. We recommend talking to a licensed pesticide applicator. The treatments you can find over the counter will not be as effective as those provided by a licensed applicator.

Even if your ash trees currently do not have the EAB, anyone with an ash tree should make a treatment or replacement plan. It is only a matter of time before EAB targets your tree. If you are unsure whether your ash tree is infected, it is best to contact either the Kansas Forest Service, Kansas Department of Agriculture, or your local extension office to get more information and have your tree evaluated.