

Firewood and the Spread of Emerald Ash Borer

A Serious New Forest Pest in the U.S. and Canada

Essay by:

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Invasive Species – Coming to America – by Land, Sea, and Air.....

A bug has come to North America as an advantageous wayfarer riding with human commerce - *It could not have arrived without the help of human activity.* It is an invasive species that is killing hardwood trees, and coincidentally, the raw material that is used to make baseball bats.

Emerald Ash Borer – A new invader attacking America’s Forests.....

Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire, is a brightly colored beetle from Asia that was first discovered near Detroit, Michigan in 2002. Since then it has been found in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Ohio (2003), northern Indiana (2004), northern Illinois and Maryland (2006), western Pennsylvania and West Virginia (2007), and Wisconsin, Missouri and Virginia (2008).

Cheap imports from Asia? They may cost more than you think.....

EAB was probably introduced into the United States on solid wood packing material (crates) that originated in its native Asia. Over the past several decades, it has been customary for USDA Plant Quarantine Officers to inspect such cargo upon arrival in the United States. However, since detecting insects like EAB in an imported shipment is such a ‘hit-or-miss’ process, solid wood packing materials are now fumigated to kill hitchhiking insects as a condition of entry. Unfortunately, the few insects that we missed in those imported shipments 10 or more years ago, have led to a full fledged invasion that is costing us millions of dollars in losses and control costs for protecting our precious forest resources.



Emerald Ash Borer at work.....

Adult emerald ash borer beetles do nibble on ash foliage but actually cause little damage. However, the larvae (immature stage) of the beetle feed on the inner bark of ash trees (cambium). This disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. There is currently no effective treatment for EAB. Infested trees are cut down and destroyed.

Since its discovery in Eastern America, EAB has....

- Killed tens of millions of ash trees in southeastern Michigan alone, with tens of millions more lost in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Virginia, Ontario, and Quebec.
- Caused regulatory agencies and the USDA to enforce quarantines (Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and fines to prevent potentially infested ash trees, logs or hardwood firewood from moving out of areas where EAB occurs.
- Cost municipalities, property owners, nursery operators and forest products industries tens of millions of dollars.

Who cares about Emerald Ash Borer?

A group of organizations and individuals with diverse interests, **The Continental Dialogue**, has come

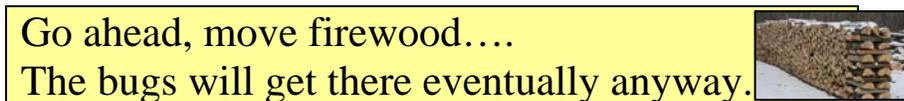
together to abate the threat to North American forests from non-native insects and diseases. One result of the collaboration has been the creation of the public information website, ‘Don’t Move Firewood’ (<http://www.continentalforestdialogue.org/>).

The objective of the ‘Don’t Move Firewood’ campaign is to “..... communicate and market key ideas about protecting forests.” The following organizations formally support the website and play an on-going role in developing its content:

Alliance for Community Trees	Purdue University, Department of Entomology
American Forest Foundation	Society of American Florists
American Nursery & Landscape Association	Society of American Foresters
National Association of State Foresters	The Nature Conservancy
Partnership for Saving Threatened Forests	US Forest Service, Northeastern Area

Who could care less?

Recently a national internet marketing group came up with a bumper sticker that reads:



At first glance, this appears to be an innocent attempt to make a little money at no cost because ecosystem services are, of course, “free”, according to our current mind set. What is the harm in a few more dead trees? Why should this business think about the consequences to long term sustainability when we as a society have largely concluded that natural resources are seemingly inexhaustible – *are there for the taking - will always be there?*

What’s wrong with this picture?

On closer scrutiny, it is not the absurdity of naysayers like this who prey on the ignorance of other people that is most concerning. They have shown a spark of creativity - no matter how misguided. Rather, it is the message inside the message - the one that says “..... *abandon all hope - there is nothing we can do anyway*”.

This is the kind of wrongheaded inference that quietly destroys the public will to take action in times of manageable crises. It is the kind of thinking that said we could not cure polio or land a man on the moon. It is the message of despair that says we cannot lift the shroud of hunger in undeveloped countries, or find shelter for the homeless in our own country. It is plainly wrong.

Bravehearted people don’t quit!

Every **farmer** knows that weeds will always sprout and insects will keep coming back for another meal - *yet he/she keeps tending the fields*; every **doctor** sees incurable patients without knowing if or when a cure will be developed, *but he/she keeps seeing them*; every **naturalist** struggles against the self-interests of a society that is largely isolated from nature, *but he/she keeps trying to shine the light.....*

With the unwitting help of Mankind, the Emerald Ash Borer hitched a ride to a new continent where it can reproduce, multiply, and spread without the co-evolved predators and parasites that keep it in check in Asia. If it is to be controlled, *and it should*, it will have to be controlled by the new top predator in America – *Mankind*. Moving Emerald Ash Borer around in firewood only makes the problem worse. Stopping the movement of Emerald Ash Borer in firewood from quarantine areas is a small thing we can do – *a small price to pay* – to help protect America’s forests from Emerald Ash Borer and other plants pests.

Note: You can learn more about Emerald Ash Borer and what else is being done about it in the U.S. and Canada at the following website: <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/index.cfm>.