MUNICIPAL ASH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO EMERALD ASH BORER

PLANT LIVE GROW

All Vermont communities are encouraged to determine their ash management strategy in response to emerald ash borer (EAB). EAB feeds on and kills all species of ash trees, and most ash trees will die within 5 years of infestation. There are three broad strategies to consider: **preemptive management, selective management**, and **reactive management**. A public ash tree inventory or survey is an important first step to assess your community's vulnerability to EAB. When selecting a management strategy, consider the community's ash tree values, your town's management goals, available resources, volunteer involvement, and public support. Whatever approach your community selects, it is important to help residents understand their options for managing EAB by providing accurate information and directing them to VTinvasives.org and VTcommunityforestry.org for additional information and guidance.

Ash Tree Management Options

Preemptive Management

Ash trees along downtown streets and rural roads, in parks, and along trails are removed prior to EAB infestation and, if appropriate, replaced (1:1 or 2:1) with a diversity of species that do not host EAB. As a result, the community contains no public ash trees and, as such, no future concerns over EAB. **COST:** The initial costs associated with this option will be high due to expenses associated with tree removal and replacement. Streets and parks will have major canopy gaps temporarily before replacement trees become well established. However, limited annual cost for EAB management will be incurred after the implementation of the strategy.

Selective Management

High-value ash trees in selected areas (streets and parks) are managed actively and protected for future generations. Those in other areas (e.g. woodlands) are left unmanaged (and will likely succumb to EAB infestation) or are managed under the guidance of a forest management plan. In wooded areas with trails, management of high-risk ash trees will still be needed. Ash trees are regularly monitored for their health and levels of EAB infestation. Insecticide treatment of EAB and ash tree removal may be applied where financially and culturally appropriate. Tree replacement (1:1 or 2:1) will be prioritized towards community needs, and dead or dying ash trees along roads and in parks will be replaced with non-host species to prevent major canopy gaps in neighborhoods. Along rural roads, trees will be removed before or at early infestation to reduce risk and long-term cost. **COST:** Treatment, removal, and replacement costs will be spread out over an extended period.

Reactive Management

Ash trees are managed and maintained the same as all other trees in the community. No survey is conducted to detect and monitor EAB's spread and no control actions, including replanting and treatment efforts, are pursued, even when EAB becomes established. However, the community is still responsible for the removal of hazard trees along roads, trails, and in parks. Ultimately, most ash trees will die as the infestation spreads through the municipality. **COST:** Although this strategy may cost nothing up front, significant costs will be incurred over a short period of time as ash die quickly. Additionally, the cost of the removal of dead ash trees is more expensive than live trees due to decreased structural integrity of EAB-infested trees and the risk they pose to tree removal crews.

Learn more about municipal EAB management at VTcommunityforestry.org

FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION VERMONT

THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT EXTENSION

Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program; vtcommunityforestry.org

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in partnership with University of Vermont Extension