

Frequently Asked Questions

Insecticide Applications to Protect Ash Trees from Emerald Ash Borer



The invasive forest insect emerald ash borer, first confirmed in Vermont in 2018, threatens all species of ash trees statewide. Some municipalities, landowners, or other land managers may choose to treat selected ash trees with insecticide (a specific type of pesticide) to protect them from emerald ash borer infestation.

Pesticide use is governed by 6 VSA, Chapters 81 & 87 and the Control of Pesticides supporting [regulations](#).

Pesticides registered for use in Vermont are broken into two broad categories:

- 1. Restricted use / Class A** pesticides that can only be purchased and applied by certified pesticide applicators. All restricted use pesticides are Class A pesticides categorized by the Environmental Protection Agency or the State of Vermont.
- 2. General use / Class B and C** pesticides that can be applied by people with or without a certified pesticide applicator license. General use pesticides are broken into two groups; Class B pesticides are typically for outdoor use and contain greater than 3% active ingredients) and Class C (recommended for homeowner use and contain less than 3% active ingredients).

More information about pesticide [product registration and classification](#) and pesticide applicator certification in Vermont is available from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

Vermont Forests, Parks & Recreation and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets recommend that insecticides used to treat ash trees for emerald ash borer contain the active ingredients **emamectin benzoate** or **azadirachtin**. These pesticides have the least ecological impact on soils, groundwater, and pollinators compared to other types of chemical treatments for EAB. Trunk-injected systemic pesticides, applied with specialized equipment via carefully drilled holes in the base of the trunk, enter directly into the vascular system of the tree. This technique reduces the risk of insecticide drift away from the site. However, some trunk-injected and systemic insecticides, including some containing emamectin benzoate, cannot be purchased or used by uncertified landowners because they are classified as [restricted use or Class A pesticides](#), which require testing and certification through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

Contact:

Pesticide Certification and Training Coordinator
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620
(802) 828-1732
agr.pest@vermont.gov

Anyone applying pesticides should choose the proper pesticide labeled for the site and pest, thoroughly read the label prior to use, and ensure that the pesticide is legally registered for use in Vermont.

Remember, THE LABEL IS THE LAW!

The following pages include some frequently asked questions individuals ask when considering insecticide treatment to protect privately owned ash trees on their own property publicly managed ash trees on municipal property.

1. Are there insecticides that are registered for use in state of Vermont for control of emerald ash borer?

Yes, there are insecticides registered for use in Vermont that offer protection to ash trees from emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation. Ensure that any insecticide available for purchase online is registered in Vermont by searching the Vermont Agency of Agriculture [pesticide product registration webpage](#).

A list of all insecticides registered for use in the State of Vermont and intended for treatment of emerald ash borer can also be provided by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. To obtain an up-to-date list or with any questions about the state's pesticide product registration page, contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets at the contact information listed above.

2. Can I apply insecticide to ash trees on my own property? If so, how do I know which insecticides I can legally use?

Yes, landowners can apply general use or [Class B and Class C pesticides](#) that can be legally purchased in Vermont to their own ash trees without a pesticide applicator certification. However, most pesticides used to treat ash trees for emerald ash borer are restricted-use pesticides that do require pesticide applicator certification and are not allowable for use by uncertified landowners. For questions regarding the legality of a specific pesticide use, contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets at the contact information listed above.

3. What certifications does a person need to apply insecticides to ash trees on municipally owned land or on private property that is not their own?

Municipal employees applying pesticides other than [Class C](#) pesticides (defined as general use pesticides for use in and around the home) on land owned by their municipality must hold a Non-Commercial or Government Pesticide Applicator Certificate in category 3A (Ornamentals & Shade Trees). Non-commercial or government pesticide applicators do not need to be employed by a company licensed to apply pesticides.

Companies or individuals applying pesticides to the property that is not their own must hold a Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certificate in category 3A (Ornamental & Shade Tree Pest Control) and must provide the customer with an invoice or statement with specific information related to the application, including the name of the pesticide(s) used, the EPA registration number(s), amounts used, target pest, and the applicator name and signature. Certified commercial applicators must be employed by a licensed company in good standing with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and should provide proof of this company certification to the consumer. Search for commercially certified pesticide applicators in good standing by company name by:

- utilizing the [USAPlants](#) and Vermont Agency of Agriculture database (updated daily); or
- utilizing the [Kelly Solutions](#) and Vermont Agency of Agriculture webpage (updated weekly)
- contacting the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets at the contact information listed above.

For a list of Vermont tree care companies in good standing with the Agency of Agriculture and that employ both a certified arborist and a category 3A certified commercial applicator, see the [Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's list of Ash Tree Protection Services](#).

4. Do municipalities need a permit to apply insecticide to ash trees in the right-of-way?

Right-of-way pesticide permits only need to be acquired by those entities applying herbicides for the purpose of maintaining vegetation within rights-of-way. Municipalities may treat ornamental trees along streets and sidewalks, and on other municipal properties such as parks, without a right-of-way pesticide permit.

5. When is it too late to treat an ash tree for an emerald ash borer infestation?

Ash trees already infested with emerald ash borer can still be treated effectively with insecticide to preserve the tree and reduce the spread of the beetle. However, if 30% or more of the canopy is dead, the chances of preserving an ash tree with insecticide are greatly reduced. A certified arborist can evaluate the health of a specific high-value ash tree to determine if it is a candidate for insecticide treatment – see our resource on [“Options for Protecting Ash Trees from Emerald Ash Borer with Insecticide Treatments”](#).

Learn more at VTcommunityforestry.org/EAB

Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program

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



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