

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## “Is Your Ash Tree Infested with the Emerald Ash Borer?”

Submitted by Dr. G. Tom Surber, Chairman of the City of Norfolk Tree Advisory Board

So you have found a green beetle and want to know if it is an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) known to kill ash trees it infests. As of spring 2015 the EAB has not been found in Nebraska, but at less than 65 miles away it is close. The earlier warning we have the better the reactions can be. Here are some ways to identify an EAB.



Pat Mrsny, City of Norfolk Park Superintendent at a recent Tree Advisory Board meeting, showing a wood sample with signs of EAB infestation

Looking at the beetle, answer the following questions:

1. Is this a green beetle? Does the insect (six legs) have hard wings on its back that lay parallel and are bright green in good light? The wings should not cross. ☐☐
2. Is this a small beetle, less than ½ inch? Could this beetle sit comfortably on a penny without hanging out over the sides of the penny? If larger than a nickel, it is not an EAB.
3. Is the green of the wings solid green without other wing markings? EABs do not have spots or stripes on their wings. There are other more common green beetles with white spots or red or yellow strips on their wings.

If the beetle meets the above three criteria, put the beetle into a small glass or plastic bottle or box, label with your name, address, phone number and email address. Take the beetle to the local County Extension Office or the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District (LENRD) office in the Lifelong Learning Center at Northeast Community College. Special kits for transporting EAB beetles are available from the Extension Office or the LENRD. These are not necessary, just helpful with more information and an EAB size bottle.

Is your ash tree infected? Use a tree identification book to make sure it is an ash tree. Mountain ash trees aren't truly ash trees. Note the condition of the tree. Are the high branches thinning or dying? The earliest sign of EAB infestation is dying of the small branches high in the tree. This die back may take three years from when the first beetle landed on the tree.

Does the tree have “D” shaped or perfect half circle less the 1/8 of an inch holes in the bark? Other pests may make round or oblong or elliptical holes. No other insect besides the EAB makes small perfect half circle holes on an ash tree.

Is the tree growing lots of small branches on its trunk? Many ash trees will compensate for the loss of higher branches with growing many small branches on the trunk. This makes the trunk look bushy or unshaven.

Is there woodpecker damage to the tree? Woodpeckers can find and eat the EAB larvae. Woodpeckers on ash trees can leave splotches of stripped off bark under which are round to oblong chipped holes.

Is the bark of the tree splitting up and down the tree? This is a fairly late sign of the EAB.

If you find any of the above evidence on your ash trees, look for the beetles from mid-May until the end of summer. Once you find a beetle, make sure it meets the criteria above then take it to tree officials for identification and further guidance.