

# Early warning

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EXTENSION

## Emerald Ash Borer First Detector program helps Minnesotans protect their trees and forests

Emerald ash borer, a small green insect deadly to ash trees, has made its way to Minnesota. This is not good news, but it's something University of Minnesota Extension has been preparing for with its First Detectors program.

### CHALLENGE

- ▶ Since 2002, emerald ash borer has killed tens of millions of ash trees in neighboring states. With the second largest concentration of ash trees in the country, Minnesota has much to protect.
- ▶ Ash trees lack a way to defend against these pests. Once an ash is attacked, it will be killed.
- ▶ The insect moves slowly on its own, but can infect entirely new areas when transported by people in firewood and other wood products.

### RESPONSE

Extension educators teamed up with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to formulate a response plan:

- ▶ **Delay emerald ash borer's arrival.** Online diagnostic tools, newspaper articles and trainings for the public teach Minnesotans how to avoid bringing this pest to our state.
- ▶ **Quickly identify it once it arrives.** In 2008, Extension experts trained 180 people throughout the state as First Detectors for emerald ash borer. More trainings are scheduled for spring 2009.
- ▶ **Minimize the damage.** A genetic conservation program operated by Extension will help preserve the ash tree gene pool.



University of Minnesota Extension is equipping the state to defend its landscape.

### RESULT

- ▶ Minnesota now has First Detectors around the state ready to assist their communities to identify emerald ash borer.
- ▶ Some First Detectors have already been called to examine suspicious ash trees and help landowners understand common indicators of emerald ash borer.
- ▶ All First Detectors are trained in a step-by-step process to identify infestation, collect samples and alert the state. These volunteers also deliver prevention education to their communities and collect seeds for the genetic conservation program.

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**Emerald ash borer is notoriously difficult to detect and most infestations have been discovered by the general public. First Detectors fill a critical role in helping citizens diagnose and report suspected emerald ash borer infestations to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.**

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