



North Carolina Forest Service
Forest Health Program

ASH PROTECTION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Introduction

The emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis*) is a non-native invasive insect already responsible for killing hundreds of millions of ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) in the U.S. Considered by many to be the most destructive forest pest ever seen in North America, costs associated with EAB will undoubtedly reach into the billions of dollars nationally.

First detected in the U.S. near Detroit in 2002, EAB was found in N.C. in 2013. Over the next 5 years, it was confirmed in 37 counties statewide, making it the fastest-spreading invasive forest pest this state has ever seen. Ash is a popular choice for urban plantings and seeing large ash trees forming a canopy over the street is not an uncommon sight. EAB can be found in or within five miles of the six most populous urban areas in the state: Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Durham, and Asheville.

Objectives

With EAB infiltrating new areas each year, it is imperative that actions are taken quickly to protect the ash component of N.C.'s urban forests. The NCFS Forest Health Program received funding to provide assistance for protecting ash trees in urban areas and has established the Ash Protection Program (APP). Currently, pesticides are the most effective and immediate way to protect a tree from attack.

The APP is a short-term program that aims to:

- Provide financial assistance to municipalities and state agencies wishing to protect their ash assets with pesticide.
- Equip municipalities, homeowners, and natural resource professionals with the education needed to identify ash trees, monitor ash resources for EAB damage, and effectively manage and protect those resources.
- Increase awareness associated with the risks of transporting firewood.

Eligibility & Limitations

Eligible Beneficiaries. The intent of this program is to protect urban ash trees greater than 4” in diameter in N.C. Beneficiaries of the APP must be parties responsible for the management of urban ash trees and have a tax identification number. Eligible beneficiaries include:

- Local municipalities (e.g., cities, towns)
- Colleges, universities, and schools
- Historical or preservation associations/societies
- Non-profit organizations
- Parks (e.g., city, county, state)

Funding Limits & Priorities. A single municipality is eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in 2021. Priority will be given to municipalities nearest the known range of EAB in N.C. Ash trees are the only trees eligible for treatment. If the tree is currently infested with EAB, trees are only eligible if less than 25% of the canopy is in decline (thinning/dieback).

Applications will also be given priority based on tree size and relative urban importance, as follows:

1. Ash trees larger than 22” DBH (diameter at breast height, 4 ½ feet above the ground) and those of historical significance as indicated in the application and/or applicants that are local governments with a population of less than 50,000 (per [02 NCAC 60B .0800 - .0807](#)).
2. Ash trees between 12-22” DBH and those in recreational areas, high-visibility areas (e.g., downtown areas, parks, etc.), or located on sites where tree failure would present a high risk to people and property (e.g., street trees).
3. Ash trees 4” - 12” DBH.

Approved Pesticide & Application Method. The only approved chemical to be applied using funds from the APP is emamectin benzoate. Emamectin benzoate is shown in independent field trials to be the most effective and longest-lasting pesticide registered for use against EAB.

All applications of emamectin benzoate shall be applied by a licensed pesticide applicator trained to administer emamectin benzoate as a stem injection. All applications must be applied as a stem injection and occur when phenologically appropriate (mid-late spring after ash trees have leafed out and before the end of June to ensure uptake during same growing season). Emamectin benzoate may be applied using the low label rate for trees smaller than 22” DBH. The medium or high rate must be used for trees larger than 22” DBH.

Municipalities may decide whether to contract the pesticide application with an outside party (e.g., an arborist or tree care company) or perform applications in-house. The pesticide must be applied according to authorized uses, directions on the label, and other Federal or State policies and requirements.

Re-treatment. The pesticide used for treatment (emamectin benzoate) is effective for 2-3 year. Therefore, trees treated last year are not eligible for retreatment through APP. Trees treated in 2018 or 2019 are eligible for re-treatment with reimbursement in 2021. Requirements and rates are same as for trees treated for the first time. Please note: an approved applicant from 2020 may apply for 2021 funds as long as the new funding is for treatment of trees that were NOT treated the previous year.

Reimbursement Rate. Reimbursements will be at cost up to \$12 per inch DBH for both contract and in-house applications. In 2018, APP beneficiaries contracted treatments for multiple ash trees at costs ranging from approximately \$6 to \$14 per inch DBH. In-house treatments, performed by one APP beneficiary in 2018, cost \$4.20 per inch DBH.

Application Process

Applicants shall submit all application components by 5 p.m. on the due date for full consideration in the APP. Full applications consist of:

- Application Part 1
- Application Part 2
- Tree Specifications List
- Quotes (only required if contracting pesticide applications):
 - ✦ One quote from tree care company/arborist (must include number of trees, cost)
 - ✦ Two quotes if quote cost is greater than \$10 per inch DBH
- Pictures of trees (as a group if grouped or individually)
- Encouraged: Map of tree locations

Applications must be sent electronically to Robert Trickel, Forest Health Branch Head, at rob.trickel@ncagr.gov.

Following application deadline, the NCFS Forest Health and Urban and Community Forestry Programs will prioritize applications based on factors listed under 'Funding Limits & Priorities'. Applicants will be notified of application status within two weeks of the deadline date.

Following application approval but prior to pesticide application, the claimant shall submit:

- Agreement for Reimbursement form (signed)

Reimbursement Process

Within 30 days of pesticide treatment, the claimant shall submit:

- Request for Reimbursement form
- Updated Tree Specifications List and/or maps

- Manpower and Equipment Documentation worksheet (required for both contracted and in-house treatments; does not affect reimbursement amount)
- Treatment invoices and proof of payment
 - ✦ *If contracted:* Invoice and proof of payment
 - ✦ *If in-house:* Receipts for equipment/chemicals purchased
- Picture(s) of pesticide application(s) in-progress

Reimbursement forms shall be sent to Robert Trickel at rob.trickel@ncagr.gov. Images received may be used by the N.C. Forest Service to promote the treatment of ash trees. Upon receipt and review of reimbursement materials, a check from the N.C. Urban Forest Council in the reimbursement amount will be disbursed to the claimant.

If an APP claimant wishes to treat additional trees not initially included in the application, claimant may request a reimbursement increase in writing from Rob Trickel before pesticide application occurs. Increasing the reimbursement amount will be subject to program limitations (no more than \$12 per inch DBH and no more than \$10,000 total per claimant), funds available, and ash tree priority level.

Questions

For questions, contact Robert Trickel at rob.trickel@ncagr.gov.

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The N.C. Forest Service is a division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Steve Troxler, Commissioner