

# United Counties of Leeds and Grenville



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## Task force to tackle emerald ash borer threat

A special task force will be established to address public education and management strategies for the impact of the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle recently discovered in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

The move came at a special joint services committee meeting Wednesday morning. The insect was found July 22 in a trap set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at a rest stop on Hwy. 401 near Mallorytown.

The EAB does not pose a threat to human health, but it is a very destructive beetle that has killed large numbers of ash trees in Ontario and the northeastern U.S. It only feeds on ash trees, not including the mountain ash.

The composition and mandate of the task force will be established at the Aug. 25 joint services committee meeting, but one of its main roles will be communication and public education.

"One of the key messages we want to get out to the public is that the main way people can slow the spread of this destructive beetle is by restricting the movement of wood to non-infested areas," explained Geoff McVey, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville forest manager. "This includes ash logs, branches, nursery stock and wood chips, as well as firewood of all species. The main mode of transportation for this beetle is through the movement of wood."

Vigilance is especially important, he said, for parks and campground operators, where visitors frequently bring their own firewood. "It should be inspected and if you think there is ash wood or if it comes from a quarantined area then the wood should be seized and burned."

Residents who suspect they might have an infestation of the EAB are urged to contact the CFIA, which may send an inspector to confirm it.

The beetle is described as "strikingly beautiful." When the adult emerges from the tree in May it creates a D-shaped hole similar to the ground plug in an electrical outlet but smaller. The adults feed, mate and lay eggs in crevices in the bark. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae feed under the bark, creating tunnels that cut off the flow of nutrients and cause the tree to die. Telltale signs of an infestation include a thinning crown, cracks in the bark and the S-shaped tunnels made by the larvae.

The CFIA, with input from the counties, is expected to establish quarantine boundaries this fall when the surveying season ends in an effort to help control the spread. These regulatory controls mean movement of wood will be restricted to within the boundaries of the quarantine unless operators can prove to the CFIA that infected wood has been made compliant using specific parameters with regard to chipping, disposal, incineration, etc.

"Once the ministerial order is established, we will be able to get more facts on how it affects firewood dealers and mill operators," Mr. McVey said.

The CFIA is the body that enforces the ministerial orders that prohibit the movement of ash tree materials and firewood of any species outside the regulated area. "That agency has inspectors looking out for the movement of firewood across municipal boundaries," Mr. McVey said. Non-compliance can lead to fines.

Once the task force is established, in addition to communication strategies it may address such issues as making recommendations to the CFIA regarding the quarantine zone boundaries; taking local ash tree inventories, especially in urban areas; encouraging landowners not to remove live and unaffected ash trees; making recommendations regarding handling of dead trees and waste materials; taking proactive measures such as tree

planting of other species and tree replacement; and seeking staff training from the CFIA as needed.

Municipal staff and key industry partners and experts are expected to form the task force, and councillors suggested the group look for economic spinoffs for affected wood to make sure parts that aren't infested are still marketed.

"Overall we want to preach patience to the public," explained Mr. McVey. "In the forest industry we've known this was coming. It's unfortunate, but it's not a surprise. Don't panic and cut all of your ash trees because some trees may prove to be tolerant or resistant."

Mr. McVey added funding may be available through certain agencies for monitoring, tree inventories in urban areas and replanting programs, but there is no funding available to assist with tree disposal or for inspections.

For more information about EAB please contact the CFIA at 1-866-463-6017 or check [www.inspection.gc.ca/pests](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/pests). A counties hotline at 1-800-770-2170, ext. 2847 offers helpful links and phone numbers for residents and will have more information about local solutions once the task force has been fully established. Information can also be found at [www.limerickforest.ca](http://www.limerickforest.ca), [http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Forests/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02\\_166994.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Forests/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02_166994.html), <http://imfc.cfl.scf.rncan.gc.ca/insecte-ensect-eng.asp?geID=1000101&ind=E>, [www.emeraldashborer.info/](http://www.emeraldashborer.info/) and [www.stopthebeetle.info/](http://www.stopthebeetle.info/).

The EAB was first discovered in Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan in 2002 and is believed to have come from eastern Asia in wooden packaging materials in the 1990s. Infestations have been detected and ministerial orders issued for Toronto and several regions in southwestern Ontario, as well as Huron County, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa and some municipalities in Quebec.

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