

Maine Forest Service is again looking for landowners willing to girdle an ash tree to monitor for emerald ash borer. Although there are no perfect methods of monitoring for emerald ash borer (EAB), one of the more sensitive tools we have for detecting EAB is the girdled trap tree.

In May, an ash tree is 'girdled' (the bark peeled off all the way around the tree). Although this will eventually kill the tree, it stays alive throughout the following year. Girdling stresses the tree, causing it to release compounds into the air which make it irresistible to any EAB in the area. If there are any EAB present in the area, they will be attracted to *this* tree, rather than flying to random ash trees. They will lay their eggs in this tree, and the larvae will start to tunnel beneath the bark. During the winter we cut down these girdled trees and bring them to one of the Maine Forest Service log-peeling workshops where we peel the bark off the trunk and search for signs of EAB tunneling under the bark. Log peeling workshops are held throughout the state, and usually occur in January or February.

Many groups and individuals have been involved with this program over the past few years. Many trap trees have been located in private campgrounds and other high-risk sites, as well as campgrounds in State and national Parks. Municipalities, land trusts, and soil and water conservation committees have also girdled trees. As always, volunteer woodlot owners who create trap trees on their properties are a core part of the EAB trap tree network.

We plan on creating trap trees again this spring, and are looking for volunteers who would be willing to participate. Instructions for girdling an ash tree are below.

Girdling a Trap Tree for Emerald Ash Borer Detection

Selecting a Trap Tree:

- Any species of ash can be used (not mountain ash).
- Trees that have at least one side open to sunlight (edge of road, field or stream or are above the canopy) are much more attractive to EAB and make better trap trees.
- Trees should be 4-10 inches DBH (larger is acceptable, but is more work to fell and peel).
- Trees should be girdled between late May and early June)
- If you have any questions about selecting or girdling a tree, please call Colleen Teerling at 287-3096

How to Girdle Trap Trees: Using a drawknife, peel the bark away from the tree down to the sapwood. At this time of year, the bark will slip away from the sapwood easily. The girdled area should be at **least** 8-10 inches, but you may peel the bark away all the way to the ground.

Be sure to get all the way down to the sapwood. Young, vigorous ash trees will sometimes begin to callus over the girdle during the summer. This reduces the level of stress and presumably makes the tree less attractive to EAB. To reduce the chance of this, try to remove all phloem tissue

Alternately you may use a pruning saw, chainsaw or other tool and make two parallel cuts, about 8-10 inches apart. Each cut should completely encircle the trunk. Cut through the phloem and down to the wood on each cut. Then use your drawknife, saw or chisel to remove the bark and phloem in the space between the two cuts. Be very careful not to cut into the sapwood. **If you cut into the sapwood, you**

will disrupt xylem cells that transport water. This can cause the trap tree to die and be ineffective as a trap. For this reason, we recommend girdling with a draw knife rather than a chainsaw.

If you would like help selecting or girdling a tree, please notify Colleen Teerling at the Maine Forest Service. Also please contact me if you have girdled a trap tree, and we will send you information about how to fell the tree and prepare it for peeling next winter.

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