

The Emerald Ash Borer: An Exotic Threat in Our Backyards

BGE actively works to maintain trees surrounding our more than 10,500 miles of overhead power lines. This is an ever-changing challenge as we attempt to balance our stakeholders' desire to have healthy trees in their neighborhoods with our commitment to delivering safe and reliable power.

A new threat has surfaced in Maryland – the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This aggressive wood boring beetle attacks all native ash trees and kills nearly 100 percent of infected trees within three years.

- The beetle, native to Asia, first appeared in Michigan in 2002 and has spread across North America.
- Millions of ash trees have been destroyed throughout the United States.
- Maryland is under a federal quarantine limiting the transport of ash tree wood in order to slow the spread of the EAB.

The EAB is an imminent threat to the safe and reliable operation of BGE's electric system and to customers' personal property and safety. Once the EAB kills an ash tree, it becomes structurally unsound. This greatly increases the likelihood that the tree will uproot or break-off and/or shed large branches. Both are direct threats to the electric grid.

The trees, once dead, are unsafe to climb and require cranes and other specialty equipment to remove them.

What we are doing:

- BGE is currently surveying rights-of-way and electric equipment as part of its routine vegetation management program.
- During this process, BGE will identify and mitigate the potential impact of Ash trees to our overhead electric facilities.
- Ash trees located up to 40 feet away from equipment that feed residential areas, or are adjacent to other BGE facilities such as substations and high voltage transmission lines can pose a threat to reliability during the four-year vegetation management cycle. They will be prioritized and targeted for removal.
- If trees are located on private property, property owners will be contacted and asked to cooperate in this effort in order to maintain safe operating conditions and lessen the potential for increased electric service interruptions.

What can you do?

- With close to 1.5 million ash trees in BGE's service territory, residents and other land owners' personal property and safety are also at risk from damaged and dead ash trees.
- It is possible to treat your trees with insecticides that can prevent EAB infestation. Customers who treat their trees must notify BGE to ensure that they can be monitored and are not removed at this time.

- More information on insecticide treatments can be accessed at the following link:
http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/eab/pdf/NABB_DecisionGuide.pdf

For additional information about the EAB threat, please visit the following websites:

- Maryland Department of Agriculture: <http://www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests/Pages/eab.aspx>
- US Fish and Wildlife Service: <http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/eab/>
- USDA:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/?1dmy&urile=wcm%3Apath%3A/APHIS_Content_Library/SA_Our_Focus/SA_Plant_Health/SA_Domestic_Pests_And_Diseases/SA_Pests_And_Diseases/SA_Insects/SA_Emerald_Ash