

Emerald Ash Borer Ash Tree Utilization Options

Promoting Urban Wood Resources and Developing Markets

The Challenge

The emerald ash borer is an invasive beetle from Asia that has killed 10 to 15 million ash trees and caused extensive environmental and economic damage in southeastern Michigan. Communities must remove not only trees killed by the borer, but trees that are too old or diseased. These trees have economic potential if their wood can be processed after removal. The Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council saw a need for a large-scale regional plan to encourage widespread utilization of ash and other urban tree species after they are removed. This plan would help move harvested urban wood into value-added markets and expand the market potential and demand for wood products made from recycled urban trees.

The Solution

The U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) provided funding to the Southeast Michigan RC&D Council, in cooperation with Michigan State University, to promote activities that use urban wood. By increasing the volume of urban wood going to value-added markets, the project brings greater economic benefits to communities.

To increase the profitability of using urban wood, the Council provided funds to boost processing capabilities. The project also involved demonstration projects, research, training, and outreach to build public interest and support for using urban wood. Project partners made education and communication efforts to match urban wood suppliers with users. Partnerships with local groups were formed that led to the development of additional marketing opportunities for the region. An extensive list of resources was identified and made available online to assist municipalities, industries, landowners, and others interested in producing value-added products from urban trees removed following an emerald ash borer infestation or other causes.

Ash utilization—finding solutions and creating new opportunities.



The new Traverwood Branch of the Ann Arbor District Library features extensive use of ash wood as flooring, paneling, and beams. The wood came from emerald ash borer-killed trees harvested from the development site prior to construction.

Resulting Benefits

- Reduced waste wood disposal costs
- Value added to borer-damaged and other urban wood that ordinarily would go to waste
- Increased public demand and support for urban wood products and utilization programs
- Created new economic opportunities for wood waste
- Strengthened the wood products industry in southeastern Michigan and brought more economic activity to communities

Sharing Success

- The Southeast Michigan RC&D Council's ash utilization resource guide is available at <http://semircd.org/ash/education/resources>
- Additional information about ash utilization options is available online at <http://semircd.org/ash/>



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