

Emerging Pest: Emerald Ash Borer

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Emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis*, is a small (1/2-inch) metallic green, highly destructive beetle discovered in southeastern Michigan in 2002. Experts believe this beetle arrived several years prior to its discovery, infesting solid-wood packing material from shipments from its native Asia.

Adult beetles feed on ash foliage, but cause little damage. However, the larvae (the worm-like immature stages) feed on the inner bark of ash trees and disrupt the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Unlike other tree-boring beetles, EAB feeds

on and kills healthy ash trees. Since its discovery, EAB has killed more than 30 million ash trees in Michigan alone with tens of millions more lost in Ohio and Indiana.

On its own, the beetle moves slowly through the landscape, only about one mile annually. However, humans have greatly accelerated the spread of this exotic

insect by moving infested nursery stock, firewood and logs to non-infested areas. A federal quarantine has been issued to prevent potentially infested ash trees, logs or hardwood firewood from moving out of areas where EAB occurs. Quarantined states include Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Maryland. It is important not to move firewood from

these heavily infested states into Nebraska.

Because of the inevitability of this beetle reaching Nebraska, homeowners may want to think twice before planting ash trees in their home landscape. The Nebraska Forest Service no longer recommends planting ash trees in the state.

Emerald ash borer has not been found in Nebraska

so far. But, it is important to stop the spread of this beetle quickly if shows up.

Peak emergence of the beetle is in June. Beetles will be found feeding on foliage of ash trees. If you see this beetle or think your ash tree may be infested, contact Nebraska State Entomologist Julie Van Meter at 471-6847.



Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Forestry Archive

Emerald ash borer
(magnified—actual
size 1/2-inch)

Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Mid to late June is an excellent time to take softwood cuttings of shrubs to start new plants. Some shrubs which can be propagated in this way are spirea, lilac and viburnum.

Keep a close eye on the quality of your spring crops. Hot weather causes lettuce to bolt and become bitter. Plant a warm season crop as soon as the spring vegetables are harvested.

For hanging baskets in cool, shady locations, use tuberous begonias, ferns, impatiens or fibrous rooted begonias in combination with trailing plants, such as English ivy.

When you buy nursery stock that is container grown, check the root ball and make sure it is not bound too tightly. A mass of circling roots will stay that way even after it is planted in the ground.

Remove old flower heads from annual bedding plants to keep them blooming.

If you do not have much room to landscape, consider using some of the many dwarf varieties available. These are plants that have slow growth and stay small, so there is little pruning maintenance. There are numerous dwarf evergreens, flowering trees and shrubs from which to choose.

Disbud chrysanthemum flowers to secure large, beautiful blooms on straight, strong stems. To disbud, remove the small side buds along the stems which form in the angles of the leaves. This will allow all the food reserves to be used for one large flower rather than many smaller ones.

Plant annual flowers in tubs or large containers for the porch or terrace. Make sure there are holes in the container's bottom to provide good drainage.

Remove foliage from spring bulbs after it turns yellow and begins to dry. Set out bedding plants to cover the bare spots using care not to damage the bulbs.

Watch for and control blackspot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.

Use bark mulch around young trees to protect them from lawn mower damage.

Spring flowering shrubs such as spirea, viburnum, lilac and forsythia should be pruned as soon as they are done blooming.

In most cases, blossom-end rot on tomatoes, peppers, squash and watermelons can be prevented. Do this by maintaining uniform soil moisture by mulching and watering correctly, planting in well drained soil and not cultivating deeper than one inch within one foot of the plant. Also avoid the use of high nitrogen fertilizers.

2008 Year of the Eggplant

Eggplant was introduced to the United States in the early 1800s by our third president, Thomas Jefferson. An avid gardener, Jefferson was interested in discovering new plants and grew many flowers and vegetables from around the world in his extensive gardens at Monticello.

Classification and Varieties

Eggplants are frost-tender, herbaceous perennials that are usually grown as annuals. The branched plants reach 2 to 4 feet tall and are covered with hairy leaves, sometimes having tiny spines. The attractive, star-shaped flowers are usually purple, sometimes white and produce edible fruit that may be black, purple, green, white, yellow, orange or red, sometimes striped or shaded. The flesh is a creamy white and speckled with tiny brown seeds. Harvest dates vary from 45 to 90 days after transplanting seedlings into the garden.

Eggplants are generally classified by the shape of their fruit. There are five basic groups: globe, elongated or cylindrical, egg-shaped, specialty and pea eggplants. Each category offers a choice of eggplants in varying colors, sizes and days to harvest. In the variety descriptions the number of days from transplanting to harvest is shown in parentheses.

The most common type in North America is the western or oval eggplant that has large, deep purple, pear-shaped fruits. These types are most commonly used for stuffing, baking and grilling.

Black Beauty (80 days) is the classic eggplant with deep purple skin and white flesh. The large 8 to 10 inch fruits can weigh up to a pound.

Dusky hybrid (63 days) is an improved variety that produces smaller, 5 to 7 inch, purple-black fruits on productive plants that have disease resistance to tobacco mosaic virus (TMV).

Japanese varieties are typically small fruited with a variety of shapes and thin skinned in beautiful, deep purple or light violet colors, sometimes blended with white or green. The skin is tender so fruits do not need to be peeled. These varieties are ideal for stir-frying, grilling, sauteing and pickling.

Ichiban hybrid (58 days) has long 10-inch fruits that are very deep purple, almost black in color. In addition to delicious flavor, this variety is slow to set seed and very productive. Another early variety is **Millionaire hybrid** (60 days) which produces 8 to 12 inch long fruits that are glossy black and nearly seedless. **Orient Charm hybrid** (65 days) has fruits that are pale lavender, fluorescent pink or pastel pink streaked with white.

Recently, two varieties have won the prestigious All-America Selections Award, the first eggplants to win in almost seventy years. Both have excellent flavor and texture,



Orient Charm hybrid



Fairy Tale hybrid



Hansel hybrid



Easter Egg



Kermit hybrid



Calliope hybrid



Casper hybrid



Rosa Bianca

are highly productive over a long harvest period and widely adapted throughout North America. **Fairy Tale hybrid** (51 days) won in 2005 for its elegant white fruits striped in violet and purple shades. Fruits can be picked when small, only 1 to 2 ounces for a unique miniature eggplant or left on the plant to double in size without losing any flavor or tenderness. The new **Hansel hybrid** (55 days) is a 2008 award winner that produces clusters of glossy, dark purple fruits borne over a long season on plants that out yield traditional varieties. Fruits can be harvested when only 2 to 3 inches in length or left to grow to a full 6 to 10 inches long.

Round, egg-shaped eggplants come in a variety of colors. **Easter Egg** (52 days) is a fast maturing variety with highly ornamental, egg-shaped white fruits. While it is commonly sold as a novelty plant, the fruits are edible. The green and white striped **Kermit hybrid** (60 days) is about the size of a golf ball and popular in Thai cooking. **Turkish Italian Orange** (75 days) bears brilliant orange, egg-shaped fruits that are typically eaten when young and

green.

There are many specialty and heirloom eggplants available. **Bambino hybrid** (45 days) is a true baby vegetable with miniature 1-inch eggplants produced on dwarf, 12-inch plants. This is an excellent ornamental choice for edging and containers.

Calliope hybrid (64 days) is an Indian-type eggplant with beautiful oval fruits with a rich purple skin streaked with white. Fruits can be harvested when only 2 inches for baby eggplants or allowed to reach 4 inches. **Casper** (70 days) is an elongated white eggplant with 6-inch fruits on compact plants. **Rosa Bianca** (88 days) is the classic Italian heirloom variety prized for the extremely creamy interior flesh and beautiful skin in shades of rose, lavender and white.

Garden Preferences

Soil—Eggplants prefer a rich, fertile soil with plenty of organic matter. Add well-rotted compost or manure before planting. If needed, work in a balanced, time-released fertilizer when preparing the soil.

Sunlight—Plant eggplants in full sun where they will

see EGGPLANT on page 10