



Governor Ted Strickland
Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher
Director Robert J. Boggs

Office of Communication
8995 East Main Street • Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax 614-466-7754
ODA home page: www.ohioagriculture.gov • e-mail: agri@mail.agri.state.oh.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Proposed Op-Ed Piece for Publication During Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week, May 20-26
May 17, 2007

Firewood Sparks Burning Issue: Buy Local, Burn Local to Protect Ohio's Trees *Firewood houses Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive pests threatening our natural resources*

By Director Robert J. Boggs, Ohio Department of Agriculture

Memorial Day weekend is fast approaching and many Ohioans are preparing their camping checklist in anticipation of a big, three-day weekend. Marshmallows, sunscreen, and a cooler of ice all top the list of things not to forget. But one thing missing from this year's list: "firewood," and in its place, a note to buy wood close to your destination.

While it seems harmless to throw a few pieces of firewood in the truck before hitting the road to wide-open spaces, you may want to think again. The same firewood that will be heating your campsite could very well fuel the destruction of our natural resources, thanks to a hitch-hiking pest found just beneath the bark. It only takes one piece of firewood to kill millions of trees, changing Ohio's landscapes and your favorite outdoor spots forever.

This is a lesson we've learned the hard way as we find reminders, like the ash tree-killing insect, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), throughout the great state of Ohio. This invasive insect, while small in size, has a big appetite for our state's 5 billion ash trees and billions more throughout the nation. Now found in five states and 26 Ohio counties, this beetle threatens colossal ramifications to our environment and our economy – and firewood continues to spark its spread.

The insect itself spreads less than one-half mile per year but can move cross country thanks to our help. For the majority of the year, EAB is hidden just beneath the bark of ash trees, or when cut up, just beneath the bark of our firewood. Because it's an illusive insect, many citizens inadvertently assist its spread by transporting seemingly harmless firewood.

It doesn't stop there. Firewood is home to many invasive insects, pests, and diseases that can be destructive to our environment. Gypsy moth, Asian long horn beetle, sirex wood wasp, Dutch elm disease, and many others create a long laundry list of plant-killing invasives easily spread via firewood.

- more -

Page 2 of 2 – Op-Ed on EAB Awareness Week

As you can see, the movement of firewood over long distances is a burning issue, and while recently brought to light because of EAB headlines throughout Ohio, it's an age-old practice that plays a key role in the future fate of our environment. We have an opportunity in front of us to take an active role in preserving our landscapes and hardwood forests. With one small decision to buy local firewood and burn local firewood, we can help slow the spread of Emerald Ash Borer and other destructive pests, ultimately protecting our valued natural resources.

I encourage you to cross firewood off of your camping checklist as you prepare for the holiday weekend, outdoor trips this summer, and other outings years down the road. Instead, take that extra time to tell fellow campers about the firewood facts and the significant role they play in caring for our great outdoors.

This is a story not just for Ohioans but others throughout the nation. The message resonates on a state and federal level as Ohio and surrounding states garner attention to this important issue during regional Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week, May 20-26. Volunteers throughout the state will tag ash trees with signs and caution tape to help draw attention to the commonality of ash trees in our streets, landscapes, and woodlots. By doing so, Ohioans will help showcase the significance of ash trees and call upon citizens to help reduce the potential impacts of EAB to their backyards and their local communities.

Join in the efforts. Here's how you can help:

- Monitor your ash trees: Watch trees for signs and symptoms of EAB, including typical stressed tree signs; small, distinct D-shaped holes in the bark; S-shaped tunneling beneath the bark; and unusual woodpecker activity on ash trees. Report signs by calling 1-888-OHIO-EAB.
- Buy local, burn local: Be familiar with the state's quarantine, which prohibits firewood movement in certain parts of the state, abide by it, and don't move firewood. For the latest quarantine map, go to www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab.
- Spread the word, not the bug: Tell your neighbors, your local community, and others about Emerald Ash Borer and the threat of moving firewood.

Pack those marshmallows, hotdogs, and flip-flops and plan for a great vacation. But remember, do your part to protect your favorite camping spot. Leave your firewood and hitch-hiking pests at home – Buy local, burn local, protect Ohio's trees.