



The Issue

by Louis Link

As most people know, deforestation and the general loss of trees on earth is a massive issue. Humans have been part of the problem for thousands of years, however it first came to be a topic of concern in the early 1900s.

Humans are now taking measures to stop this destruction, by planting trees and trying to stop deforestation as much as possible. Unfortunately, humans aren't the only killers of trees. Every once in a while, there are large spreads of tree contagions

in America, like Chestnut Blight or Dutch Elm Disease, killing millions of trees. This is happening again right now.

The Insect

The Emerald Ash Borer(EAB) is a small, emerald-green beetle originally from Asia that is suspected to have been brought to America on a wood shipment. First found near Detroit in 2002, the Ash Borer, though tiny -only about half an inch long as an adult- has had a huge impact. Killing more than 60 million Ash Trees all across Wisconsin and the US as a whole, EAB has become the most devastating forest insect in America ever recorded. Incredibly, this insect has killed that many trees in only 35 states! This is because the average American forest is more than 23% Ash Trees, giving the beetle plenty to eat and lay their eggs in.

This problem affects everybody. In more ways than one. While the environmental impact is obviously huge, the cost to remove and replace all the dead trees is already over \$10.7 Billion just in the Northern U.S. and still growing. Ash Trees also make up the majority of trees in neighborhoods, parks, and private property. The dead trees are causing cities to lose their beauty and lowering property value substantially. Also, Ash Trees decay relatively quickly after death; causing a threat to people, homes, and cars.

Project about the Emerald Ash Borer invasion.

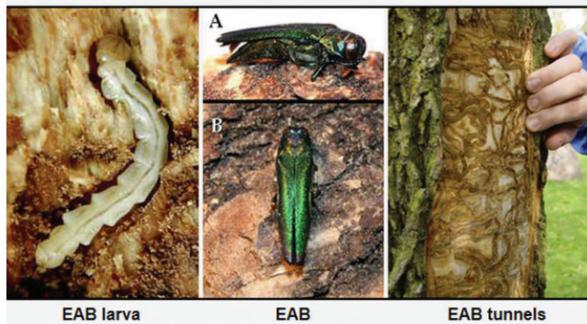
I have been working with the River Revitalization Foundation to plant new trees to replace the dead ones, increase biodiversity, revitalize the river banks that were underwater for decades, and beautify the river edge, as well as spreading awareness about the issue. The decided date was October 25, and that Sunday, with the help of 35 volunteers, we planted more than 100 Oak trees!

What You Can do

So that's what I'm doing to help; but what can you do? Of course there's the classic reuse, recycle, Etc. that comes with all environment-based problems, but things you can do to slow down the Ash Borer are more specific. First and foremost, try to buy firewood from local sources. Alone, EAB would have spread quickly, however, humans moving wood all across the US accelerated the process substantially. Getting wood from local sources can help to slow down the spread and will help your local economy. You can donate to tree planting organizations like Team Trees, or use web browsers like Ecosia who use profits to plant trees.

The best things you can do for your community is donate or volunteer at local parks, and if you are somewhere that is unaffected by EAB, inform your local government if you start seeing signs of infection. In the end, the absolute best thing you can do is tell other people. Tell people about the problem and how they can help. Post about it on social media, and inform people of this infestation.

Emerald Ash Borer



EAB larva

EAB

EAB tunnels

What I'm Doing

My name is Louis Link, I'm a Life Rank Boy Scout in Troop 15, located in Shorewood. A while ago, when I started noticing more dead trees in my area, I looked into the issue. As soon as I heard about what was happening, I wanted to help. Because I am currently working towards Eagle Rank, I decided to make my Eagle



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Manfred Olson Planetarium
uwm.edu/planetarium

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