

**Alliance for Green Heat
American Nursery & Landscape Association
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation, Bureau of Forestry
The Davey Institute
Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment
Greenspace-the Cambria Land Trust
Hines Nurseries LLC
Massachusetts Association of Campground Owners
Mulch & Soil Council
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds
National Association of State Foresters
The Ohio State University, Department of Entomology
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry
Purdue University, Department of Entomology
Society of American Florists
Society of American Foresters
Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC
The Nature Conservancy
The University of Georgia, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health
Valent USA Corporation**

Thursday, February 25, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

The Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases was formed to cultivate and catalyze collaborative action among diverse interests with the goal of abating threats to North American forests from non-native insects and diseases. The Dialogue is comprised of non-profit and for-profit organizations, government agencies, landowners, and scholars who share an interest in forest health protection. Dialogue efforts are organized around strengthening programs that prevent non-native insects and diseases from arriving, surviving and thriving on the continent.

The undersigned participants of the Dialogue are writing to encourage consideration of the Coalition for Urban Ash Tree Conservation's Emerald Ash Borer Management Statement, which endorses ash tree conservation as part of an integrated approach to managing *Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire in urban areas. The Management Statement can be found at http://www.emeraldashborer.info/files/conserve_ash.pdf, on the website developed by the USDA Forest Service, Michigan State University, Purdue University, and Ohio State University to provide comprehensive, accurate and timely information on the emerald ash borer beetle (EAB).

EAB has been responsible for extraordinary economic and environmental troubles, especially in urban areas where ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) often make up a large and disproportionate number of street and yard trees. The repercussions of the invasion of this singular forest pest are staggering for the nearly 8 *billion* ash trees in North America. Published estimates indicate EAB will cause \$10-20 billion losses in urban forests alone over the next 10 years. Indeed, EAB has already killed tens of millions of ash trees since its detection in 2002 in Michigan and, if unchecked, will eventually cause the functional extinction of North American ash.

Under-appreciated are the effects of EAB in urban settings where depleted municipal funds cannot keep up with the removal of dead and dying ash trees that rapidly become hazardous to citizens and property. The rapid loss of so many trees adversely affects many aspects of urban life, including property values, storm water mitigation, energy demands, and even residents' feelings of well-being.

Managing ash trees in urban settings often consists of removing dead and dying trees as the insect moves through and, if the budget allows, replacing them with much smaller trees. However, in view of the unprecedented scope of this problem, a broader, integrated approach that conserves ash canopy and preserves existing benefits that living ash trees provide may make more sense.

The challenge of managing EAB is determining how to incorporate sound, science-based methods of management into existing knowledge for the benefit of our citizens and the environment. Unfortunately, the concept of conserving ash canopy as part of an integrated EAB management plan is often unfamiliar to municipalities, property managers, homeowners, and others involved in managing EAB in urban settings. Therefore, the undersigned Dialogue participants encourage consideration of this approach in urban areas where EAB threatens the rapid loss of ash canopy and its subsequent benefits.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Jodie Ellis (ellisj@purdue.edu or 765-494-0822) if you have further questions or comments.

Sincerely,

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