



# Ash Wood Utilization Options for Homeowners



Emerald ash borer (EAB) poses a serious threat to ash trees in both communities and residential landscapes, killing 80% of ash trees in infested regions within 10 years of its discovery. In communities standing dead and dying trees will pose a threat to people and property. Unless a homeowner is dedicated to treating their tree long into the future most ash trees will die and need to be removed.

Once removed there are a number of options available to utilize the ash wood or to dispose of wood waste. This publication will discuss the considerations for managing your ash wood waste.

Only hardwood firewood that is certified by NDA or USDA may move out of the quarantine under a Compliance Agreement. Hardwood firewood from outside the quarantine may enter a quarantine area however once it enters it becomes a regulated item and may not leave.



## Other Options

If you are not interested in utilizing the wood for yourself but don't want it to go to waste consider donating the wood to local woodworkers, schools, parks, or community organizations. Local organizations may have a need for raw material for benches, construction, landscaping, or to create decorative pieces. Wood waste may also be disposed at a local disposal site where it will generally be recycled into mulch or compost. It is important to remember that even though your ash tree has been transformed into furniture or another decorative piece, it is likely still considered a regulated article subject to quarantine restrictions.



Photo credit: illinoisurbanwood.org

## Disposal

Not all ash wood removed due to EAB infestation will be utilized. In the event where utilization is not practical or desirable, please contact your local waste management official to locate approved locations for ash wood disposal, such as a landfill.

Regardless of how you choose to dispose your tree, be sure that no ash wood leaves the quarantine area. Remember, not all areas within the quarantine are infested with EAB and by minimizing the movement of ash wood, the risk of EAB spreading to new areas can be minimized.

### Agency Contacts:

**Nebraska Forest Service**  
[nfs.unl.edu](http://nfs.unl.edu)  
(402) 472-7211

**Nebraska Department of Agriculture**  
[nda.nebraska.gov](http://nda.nebraska.gov)  
(402) 471-2341

**USDA-APHIS**  
[aphis.usda.gov](http://aphis.usda.gov)  
(402) 434-2332

### More information on EAB and ash wood utilization:

Nebraska Forest Service: [nfs.unl.edu/EAB](http://nfs.unl.edu/EAB)

Heather Nobert  
Nebraska Forest Service



## Quarantines

Prior to determining how to utilize their ash wood, homeowners should understand the rules and regulations put in place by EAB quarantines. Quarantines are established in areas where EAB has been located in an effort to slow the spread of the pest to new areas. These state and federal regulations prohibit the movement of regulated items (see box below) outside of quarantine areas. These restrictions apply to everyone who moves wood including private citizens, tree care companies, loggers, mulch providers, municipal tree crews, and wood product companies. It is important to understand the restrictions of the quarantine when moving wood to avoid fines or penalties.

### Regulated Articles

- Ash nursery stock
- Green lumber of all ash species
- Other ash material living, dead, cut, or fallen, including logs, limbs, stumps, roots, and branches
- All hardwood composted or uncomposted chips, bark, or mulch
- All hardwood firewood or fuelwood

It is possible to obtain special certificates and permits from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture that allow the transport of ash wood out of a quarantine area. Certain criteria must be met before approval can be given. To learn more about compliance agreements, certificates, and permits, please contact the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (contact info on back).

## Options for Homeowners

The wood from ash tree removals does not need to go to waste. It is important to communicate your desired use for the tree(s) to your tree care company so they can be removed accordingly. There are several options to consider:

### Logs and Lumber

Trunks and large branches may have value as logs to sawmills. Your tree may be a candidate for sawing if it has the following characteristics:

- at least 9 inches in diameter
- at least 6 feet long
- clear of branches, cracks, other defects
- has been dead for fewer than 12 months



If you're interested in selling high-quality logs, a sawmill in your area can be found through the NFS Primary Processors Directory. It is recommended that mills be contacted prior to delivery to ensure that they will accept ash logs from urban areas.



Another option is hiring a custom sawmilling firm available to transform your ash tree into a memorable piece of furniture or lumber for your use. Ash wood can be used for custom countertops, cabinets, floors, furniture, or decorative pieces. Sawmills for hire can also be found in the Primary Processors Directory.



### Landscape

All hardwood woodchips and mulch are regulated under the EAB quarantine because it is difficult to identify ash wood from other hardwood species. Chips and mulch however may move freely within the quarantine area. Chipping or mulching ash trees is an option for homeowners who want to incorporate them into their



landscape or compost. Alternatively, logs may be sawn to produce landscape timbers.

### Firewood

Similar to woodchips and mulch, all hardwood firewood is regulated under EAB quarantine. Fortunately, ash wood makes for very good firewood. Homeowners can purchase or rent firewood splitters to make firewood for personal use. It is recommended that ash firewood is used within 10 miles of where the tree was felled.