

# Little beetle making big tree problem

The white ash tree, *Fraxinus americana*, is a large deciduous tree that can reach 100 feet in height and 75 feet in width at maturity. The shape is upright but becomes more rounded and open as the tree matures.

This impressive giant is an excellent shade tree for large lawns and parks, and is most interesting in the fall when the lush green leaves with pale undersides turn color. The foliage turns shades of bronze-violet touched with wine and chocolate, or maroon fading to lavender and pale yellow.

Many vegetatively propagated cultivars of white ash have been available in the nursery trade, but alas! That might come to an end before we can turn around. The beautiful and desirable ash trees are being attacked by a little exotic beetle from Asia in southeastern Michigan that is rapidly killing thousands of ash trees here and in Ontario.

This Emerald Ash Borer, *Agilus planipennis*, has a bright, emerald green wing color and a brassy or golden green overall. When the wings are spread, a metallic coppery red is seen. The larvae are cream colored and have a 10-segmented abdomen and a pair of brown, pincer-like appendages on the last segment.

The insect overwinters as a full-grown larva in a shallow chamber excavated in the sapwood of the tree. Adults emerge headfirst through a D-shaped exit hole that is 3 to 4 millimeters in diameter. The adults begin to emerge in late May, peak in early to mid-June, and continue into late June.

This is a very serious problem and all of Oakland County is under quarantine.

To make sure residents are up to date with research on the Emerald Ash Borer, the damage, tree removal, containment and tree replacement, a meeting will take place 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 26, at the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium, Building No. 12 East, 1200 N. Telegraph in Pontiac.

Everyone may attend the meeting to hear the latest research and future plans to limit the spread of this "destructive beetle." For further information, call (248) 858-0881.

## PROGRAM

The first program of a five-week series, A Master Composter Training for Rouge River Water Quality, will take place 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at the Bloomfield Township Public Library, 1099 Loce Pine Road at the southeast corner of Telegraph.

This is an opportunity to learn about composting, healthy lawn care, garden maintenance, soils and water quality through this hands-on volunteer service program. The \$30 registration fee includes a Michigan State University soil nutrient test.

The program is sponsored by the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority in cooperation with Rouge River municipalities. For a program brochure and to register, call (248) 288-5150 weekdays.

## SOIL ANALYSIS

Once again garden centers and a hardware store, in cooperation with SOCCA, are offering soil analysis from Saturday, April 5, through Sunday, April 20. The \$12 fee includes an organic matter test.

Among the local participants are: Auburn Oaks Nursery in Rochester Hills; C.G. Wilkop Landscaping and Garden Center, Telly's Greenhouse and Garden Center, and Uncle Lake's Feed Store in Troy. Four Seasons Garden Center in Oak



Beautiful, healthy trees are important for the landscape and environment.

Park, Boudine Nursery, Damsman Hardware and English Gardens.

To collect samples, choose the area of the property to be tested. Using a spade or trowel and a clean plastic pail, collect 10 random samples from one type of landscape area.

Remove a slice of soil extending to the bottom of the plant roots (3 inches below for lawn, 7 inches deep for flowers and vegetables). Each sample should be about 1/2 cup. Mix all samples together in the pail. Place 1 cup of well-mixed soil in a clean plastic bag. The soil shouldn't be soaking wet. To test additional samples, repeat as above.

Label all samples. Take the samples to one of the participating retailers. They will send the samples to the MSU testing laboratory. The results will be sent to you.

Why soil test? Plants take up nutrients from the soil and need to be replenished from time to time. Over-application of fertilizer can pollute streams, lakes and groundwater, cost money and ruin plants. Soil testing identifies the particular nutrients needed.

Testing for organic matter is necessary because it is continually "used" in a biologically active soil system and needs to be periodically replaced. Organic matter should comprise 5 percent or more

of the soil by weight, 5 to 10 percent by volume.

Compost and peat are examples of organic matter materials, which improve soil structure, retain water, encourage root penetration and aerate soil.

Compost is particularly beneficial because it gradually releases nutrients, supports beneficial microorganisms and earthworms, and suppresses some soil-borne diseases.

## SEMINAR

Nature and Earth Inc. will present its second seminar, A Day in the Gardens of England and Wales, Michigan Style, 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 5, at Gerych's, 710 Silver Lake Road in Pontiac.

Included are a catered lunch, book sales, and time to explore Gerych's nursery and shops. Cost is \$35 per person (late registration, after March 28, is \$45).

The featured speaker is Colleen Traylor, a seasoned horticulturist with 22 years of experience in the garden design and maintenance business. She has presented many lectures and will delight all attendees with her wit and expertise.

Enjoy a leisurely "stroll" through the great gardens of England and Wales, and receive instructions on how to accomplish this style in your own garden.

For information or to register, call Michael Saint at (248) 620-7188 or Colleen Traylor at (248) 627-6872, or e-mail: NatureandEarth@shelglobal.net.

One dollar out of each registration will be donated to the master gardener program. Attendees will receive a 10-percent discount on all Gerych's merchandise bought that day.

Marty Flegley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

## HOME AND GARDEN CALENDAR

### School of Gardening

Classes offered by the Michigan School of Gardening include the three-session Pruning Trees and Shrubs beginning Thursday, March 27, at Gerych's Ash Nursery, 1550 Orchard Lake Road in Pontiac, south of Square Lake Road and east of Telegraph. Fee is \$92.50.

Register early. Seating is limited. Some classes have pre-requisites. For more information, call (248) 445-5574 or visit [www.michschofgardening.com](http://www.michschofgardening.com). The School of Gardening will also present a two-session course for professional gardeners, Estimating Landscape and Garden Work, beginning Thursday, March 20, at Gerych's Ash Nursery. Fee is \$72.

### Customer appreciation

Ethan Allen will present Customer Appreciation Days Saturday, Sunday, March 22-23, at area stores, including Birmingham (phone (248) 540-8558), Auburn Hills (phone (248) 393-6600), Novi (phone (248) 350-7600) and Livestock (phone (586) 566-9999). Special events and promotions will be featured.

### Home Improvement

The Builders Home Improvement Show will run Friday, Saturday, March 21-22, at Cobo Center in Detroit. The show will have more than 300 exhibitors, who will display products and services for kitchens, baths, windows, doors, spas, remodeling, interior design, home offices, furniture, arts and crafts, decorative accessories, electronics, heating, cooling and appliances. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens. Admission is free for children under age 12. For more information, call (248) 862-1019 or go to [www.builders.org](http://www.builders.org).

### Learn composting

The Master Composter Program, sponsored by the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority in cooperation with Rouge River municipalities, begins at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 27, at the Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Loce Pine Road (at Telegraph). The program includes five training classes, two hours (SOCCA) composting facility and the SOCCA compost demonstration garden, and assistance with volunteer outreach activities. Volunteers receive a name badge after all program requirements have been met. Master composters are citizen volunteers who share their time and talents with the community. Volunteers learn nuisance-free

composting, healthy lawn care, healthy soils, and benefits of compost for water quality. Volunteers then help neighbors, gardeners, community organizations, and city officials with various projects related to ecological landscaping and water quality protection. The program fee of \$36.00 includes all instructions, a notebook and a computer use soil nutrient test for the volunteer's home garden. For a program brochure and registration information, contact SOCCA weekdays at (248) 288-5150.

### Create a biomedial tree

The Southeast Michigan Biomedial Society presents a biomedial workshop at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 13, in the Rochester Hills Environmental Center on Aspen Road, just west of Livestock. A biomedial tree is an attractive way to display biomedials as they grow in nature. In this workshop a biomedial tree will be constructed from start to finish, demonstrating choice of mounting materials, types of biomedials suitable for mounting, and methods of attaching plants. Basic cultural care discussed. Reservations are not necessary. The public is invited to attend this free seminar. For more information, call (248) 375-1416 or go to [www.bmsociety.org](http://www.bmsociety.org).

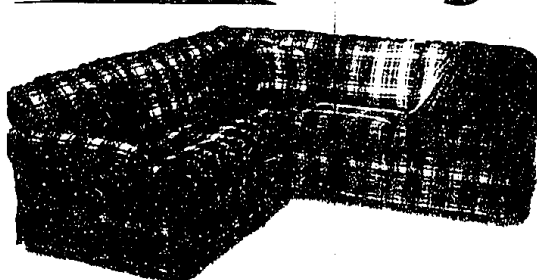
### All about birds

The Royal Oak Garden Club will host a speaker from Birds Unlimited at 7 p.m. Monday, April 14, in the Royal Oak Library Auditorium. The speaker will discuss the right plants for attracting birds to your garden. Michigan State University master gardeners will be available for any questions. Visitors are always welcome. For more information, please contact Cheryl Martin via e-mail at [cmartin@roagardenclub.org](mailto:cmartin@roagardenclub.org) or club president, Priscilla Nelson at (248) 288-4390.

### Perennials

The Community House Garden Club of Birmingham presents a program, "Doubling Up Perennials," given by Pam Palechek, senior instructor from the Michigan School of Gardening, at 7 p.m. Monday, April 14, at the Community House in Birmingham. Learn how to combine perennials to cover seasonal dormancy and fill in bulbs in blooming periods. Learn what characteristics make a perennial a good candidate to pair with others, as well as suggestions for combinations of companion plants. Cost is \$5.00 for guests. Guests are encouraged and welcome. For more information, call Pat Jery at the Community House at (248) 644-5832.

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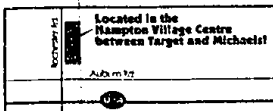
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