

Help Track the Emerald Ash Borer

Ash Tree Identification



Emerald ash borer (EAB) is a destructive insect that attacks and kills ash trees. Trees die within 3 to 5 years of infestation.

EAB attacks all true ash trees. True ash include trees in the genus, *Fraxinus*. Ash commonly found in New Hampshire include white ash (*F. americana*), green ash (*F. pennsylvanica*), and black ash (*F. nigra*).

Mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp.) is NOT a true ash and will not be infested by EAB.

Knowing how to distinguish ash trees from other trees is an important first step in monitoring and planning for this pest on your property and in your community.

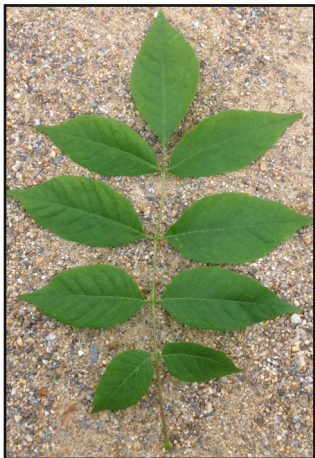


Opposite Branches—Opposite Buds

Ash is one of only a few New Hampshire trees with opposite branching. Buds and twigs are found in pairs along branches, directly across from each other. Most other trees have alternate branching where buds and twigs are staggered along the branches.

Look for ash's opposite branching pattern where it is most easily seen—at the ends of branches.

Opposite branches are also found on maple, dogwood, and horse chestnut, but the leaves of these species are unlike ash.

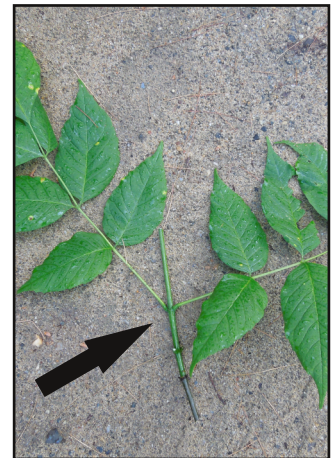


Compound Leaves

A single ash leaf, as shown in the photo on the left, is made up of 5 to 11 leaflets, organized in pairs along a middle vein with a single leaflet at the tip.

Notice in the photo on the right, that the compound leaves are found in opposite pairs along the stem.

Several other trees have compound leaves. The compound leaves of hickory and walnut are easily confused with ash, but you can distinguish these from ash by their alternate arrangement along the stem.



Diamond Patterned Bark

Ash trees can often be recognized by their diamond-patterned, furrowed bark. Bark texture is most distinct on mature white ash, as in the photo on the left. Green ash has less prominent furrows, and the bark of black ash is corky and scaly looking. The bark of young white ash is fairly smooth, as in the photo to the right. Bark of young green ash is somewhat furrowed, as in the photo on the far right.

Several tree have bark that is easily confused with ash. Oak, Norway maple, and elm are commonly mistaken for ash when looking at bark textures.

While many tree species share one or two of these characteristics, **only ash has all of these characteristics:**

1. opposite branches-opposite buds
2. compound leaves
3. diamond-patterned bark



University of New Hampshire
Cooperative Extension