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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Emerald Ash Borer Alert

BATH—Why are the ash trees “dressed up” in Oak Grove Cemetery? It’s part of a project involving the Maine Department of Agriculture and the City of Bath Forestry Department to demonstrate a method of surveying for the emerald ash borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis* or *Agrilus marcopoli*. This brilliant, emerald-green beetle has already been responsible for the death of more than 20 million ash trees (*Fraxinus spp.*) in the Midwest states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois since it was officially identified in 2002.

According to Maine State Horticulturist Ann Gibbs, “We have not yet found this pest in Maine, but we want to be prepared in the event that it does appear in the state.” Human behavior is a major factor in the spread of EAB and one of the major pathways in the dispersal of this insect is through the movement of firewood. “Visitors from the Midwest come to Maine to camp and often bring firewood with them. This project provides an opportunity to work with municipal arborists to help detect the presence of this beetle, should it make its way into Maine,” says Gibbs.

Trunks of selected ash trees in Oak Grove Cemetery were girdled (bark removed) to stress the trees. Then a band of sticky substance was applied above the girdled area to trap flying beetles. Symptoms of EAB damage include dead and dying branches, vertical splits in the bark, excessive branching at the base of the trunk, and D-shaped exit holes in the bark. Native to China, these beetles feed exclusively on ash trees and were probably brought into the US on solid wood packing material carried in cargo ships or airplanes.

“Arborists are on the front line working with trees and they will probably be the first to observe EAB if it attacks ash trees in Maine,” states Bath City Arborist and Tree Warden Tom Hoerth. These trap trees will be monitored throughout the season, and then in the fall the trees will be removed and dissected to look for evidence of this beetle. Maine arborists will be invited to observe at that time and learn about the survey technique and beetle identification.

For more information on emerald ash borer please go to <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>.