

# Chinese wasps attack ash borer

It's a bug-eat-bug world. That's the driving force for a new strategy to stop emerald ash borer.

Emerald ash borer came from China and has marched its way across the Great Lakes. Without any natural enemies in America, the pest has killed millions of ash trees.

Now we hope the pest has met its match. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is releasing wasps that naturally control emerald ash borer in China. These two species of Chinese wasps have been approved by the United States Department of Agriculture and are being released in a borer-infested island of the Mississippi River west of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Though only the size of a sesame seed, the stingerless wasps kill the borers by laying eggs into the larvae or eggs of borers (see photo below). The wasps only attack emerald ash borer and are not a threat to humans or other wildlife.

Though the wasps are new to America, the strategy is not. Scientists for decades have used parasitic wasps, beetles, and other beneficial organisms to help control such invasive pests as the cereal leaf beetle, alfalfa weevil, gypsy moth, and purple loose-strife.

It's a concept called *biological control*, and it can help reduce the use of toxic pesticides on agricultural crops (and trees in this case) while creating a more natural balance in the environment.

No one expects the release of these wasps to fully control the borer, but we hope they make a dent in the population of the pests.

No emerald ash borers have been found in North Dakota. Since there are no emerald ash borers here yet, no treatments are recommended. Nonetheless, it is just a matter of time before this pest arrives and no further planting of ash is recommended.

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Published October 2010  
Revised October 2011

Photo courtesy of David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

