THE DISTRIBUTION OF ASH IN NORTH AMERICA

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Ash trees have been important to the people of North America for thousands of years. Of the nine ash species, white ash (*Fraxinus americana* L.) and green ash (*F. pennsylvanica* Marsh.) are the most widely distributed. These ashes are common yet not dominant in most forests of the eastern United States and into Canada. They also make up a large proportion of trees in the riparian lands and shelterbelts of the Midwest and in urban areas across the country. Due to the importance of ash for water protection, durable products, shade, and shelter, the ecological and economic value of ash is huge. A variety of stressors impact the health of ash trees. The most important stressors are the emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire) and ash yellows (Mycoplasmalike organisms), both of which threaten the future of the species. We use Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plot data from across the eastern United States to analyze patterns in the distribution and health of ash trees, saplings, and seedlings across forest types, stand sizes, crown classes, and ownerships. We also assess the current and future trends in the distribution of ash through the use of EAB range and spread maps. Even though EAB has been active in the forests of several states for >5 years, ash volumes continue to increase across most of the eastern United States as forests continue to mature.