

December 2025

This monthly newsletter gives updates and resources on emerging threats to the health of Oregon's trees in natural and managed landscapes. It is published by the Oregon Department of Forestry in collaboration with other state, regional, federal, Tribal, and local agencies and organizations. To subscribe, email jim.gersbach@odf.oregon.gov

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Learn more about the hunt for genetic resistance to EAB in Oregon



Photo: Retired OSU Faculty Member Glenn Howe will give a talk Dec. 10 on the search for EAB resistance in Oregon ash.

Retired OSU College of Forestry faculty member Glenn Howe will share in a free talk some of his latest research focused on the genetics of Oregon ash and the search for any genetic resistance to emerald ash borer.

The talk will be held Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. in the Visitors Center at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, 19255 SW Pacific Highway, Sherwood.

The talk is put on by Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. Progeny testing of Oregon ash is occurring at field sites in Marion, Linn, and Washington counties.

Howe is the former Director of the Pacific Northwest Tree Improvement Research Cooperative and is a retired faculty member from the College of Forestry at Oregon State University. Glenn spent his career studying the genetics of forest trees, including tree breeding, forest tree genomics, physiological and ecological genetics of natural populations, and the effects of climate change.

John Riggins becomes OSU's new forest health Extension Specialist

This past summer, John Riggins joined the Oregon State University College of Forestry as associate professor and forest health Extension Specialist in the Department of Forest Engineering, Resources and Management.

Riggins succeeds Dave Shaw, who retired in 2024. Riggins previously served on the faculty at Mississippi State University as professor of Forest Entomology and the consulting state forest

entomologist. He chairs the research subcommittee of the Oregon Emerald Ash Borer Interagency Task Force.

As the state forest health Extension Specialist, Riggins has statewide responsibilities to educate stakeholders and respond to forest health threats, including emerald ash borer, Mediterranean oak borer and other invasive species.

“My role straddles both the research and Extension worlds,” he said. “My lab will be diving headfirst into these issues — helping convey relevant research to stakeholders and developing my own research program to find real-world solutions for the challenges insect and disease disturbances create for forest landowners in Oregon.”

He emphasized that his work will extend beyond non-native pests.

“I am also interested in and intend to work on native insects and diseases, especially those related to climate-related disturbances, such as drought and heat domes. This includes insects such as the Douglas-fir beetle, fir engraver beetle, flatheaded fir borer and pine bark beetles,” he said.

Riggins is also helping support the reactivation of a biosafety quarantine lab on the third floor of Richardson Hall. The lab, which includes a small, attached greenhouse, had been out of commission for some time. It will return to use in 2026 for research on quarantine insects and diseases that affect Oregon’s forests.

The facility will allow work on established pests as well as potential future invaders, helping provide faster responses and develop information even before some pests reach the state.

Riggins is from Nebraska. He earned his doctorate in entomology at the University of Arkansas and his master’s and bachelor’s degrees at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.



Photo: John Riggins, Oregon State University’s new Forest Health Extension Specialist.

Christine Buhl to replace Cody Holthouse as chair of the Oregon Interagency MOB Task Force

Oregon Dept. of Forestry Forest Entomologist Christine Buhl has agreed to chair the Oregon Interagency MOB Task Force as current chair Cody Holthouse leaves his role at Oregon Dept. of Agriculture and moves to the Seattle area with his family. Holthouse chaired the Task Force since it was created to coordinate Oregon’s response to the discovery of Mediterranean oak borer. Attendance at the virtual monthly Task Force meetings has grown under his leadership. It now includes federal, state, local, and Tribal governments, private organizations and tree-care companies, and interested landowners.

Karen Ripley to be remembered with a memorial tree planting next year

Colleagues of Karen Ripley, who died peacefully in her sleep on Aug. 5th after a long struggle with cancer, are planning to plant an Oregon white oak tree in her memory.

The planting will take place from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 14th. It will be part of a Friends of Trees planting in partnership with Clean Water Services. The planting will be in the Balm Grove area a few miles northwest of Forest Grove in Washington County. Please register for the planting with [Friends of Trees](#).

At the time of her death, Karen was Forest Health Monitoring and Invasive Insects Specialist for the Pacific Northwest Region of the USDA Forest Service. In that role she served on the Oregon Invasive Species Council. For many years prior to that she was an entomologist with the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Karen was instrumental in finding solutions, resources, and advice to combat invasive species in Oregon. She helped foster community with natural resource partners and she will be greatly missed. She is survived by her husband Mark, their daughter Anna, and son TJ.

If you would like to send a card to her family, the address is:

Mark Ripley

3906 N. Massachusetts Ave.

Portland, OR 97227

If you would like to make a donation in her name charities suggested by her family include:

- The Peregrine Fund
- The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation
- International Crane Foundation.



Air curtain incinerator demonstration burns in central Oregon were well attended

Photo: ODF recently held two demonstrations in central Oregon of how clean and efficiently an air curtain incinerator can burn woody debris. One event was at Collier State Park, which drew 29 people, and a second burn was in LaPine. This photo was taken at the event in LaPine, which was attended by 90 people.



Publications

- ***A Valley Without Ash: Exploring Strategies for Forested Wetland Restoration Post Emerald Ash Borer Invasion in the Willamette Valley, Oregon*** by Hull, Chloe (2024). OSU. https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/graduate_projects/3j333b36w
- ***Genomics-Driven Monitoring of Fraxinus latifolia (Oregon Ash) to Inform Conservation and EAB-Resistance Breeding*** by Melton, A.E., Faske, T.M., Snieszko, R.A., Thibault, T., Williams, W., Parchman, T. and Hamilton, J.A. (2025), *Molecular Ecology* e17640. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.17640>
- ***Monitoring Oregon ash forests in the face of the emerald ash borer: A guide for small woodland owners and managers***
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/em-9451-monitoring-oregon-ash-forests-face-emerald-ash-borer>
- ***Larval development and parasitism of emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) in Oregon ash (Fraxinus latifolia) and European olive (Olea europaea): implications for the West Coast invasion***
[Journal of Economic Entomology | Oxford Academic](#)
- ***Modelling impacts to water quality in salmonid-bearing waterways following the introduction of emerald ash borer in the Pacific Northwest, USA***. Maze, D., Bond, J. & Mattsson, M. *Biol Invasions* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-024-03340-3>
- ***Alternatives to Ash in Western Oregon: With a Critical Tree Under Threat, These Options Can Help Fill Habitat Niche***. G. Kral, and D.C. Shaw. 2023. OSU Extension EM 9396. <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9396>
- ***Oregon Ash: Insects, Pathogens and Tree Health*** by Oregon State University Extension (also available in Spanish at this same website)
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/pub/em-9380>
- ***Wood Decay Fungi Associated with Galleries of the Emerald Ash Borer*** by the University of Minnesota and Uruguay's Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria
[Forests | Free Full-Text | Wood Decay Fungi Associated with Galleries of the Emerald Ash Borer \(mdpi.com\)](#)

Useful links for more information

Past Oregon Tree Health Threats Bulletins (2023 to present)
<https://oregon-eab-geo.hub.arcgis.com/pages/latest-news>

Roundup of Oregon-specific EAB information including where to report new EAB sightings
www.OregonEAB.com

Mediterranean oak borer fact sheet
<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/fact-sheet-mediterranean-oak-borer.pdf>

Map to find where EAB is currently confirmed in Oregon

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9f29b1860cb04d36ad71b122148277f3>

EAB monitoring guidance

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/Documents/eab-monitoring-guidance.pdf>

Oregon Dept. of Agriculture

<https://www.oda.direct/EAB>

Oregon Dept. of Forestry

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/pages/foresthealth.aspx>

OSU Extension

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/collection/emerald-ash-borer-resources>

Emerald Ash Borer Information Network, a collaborative effort by the USDA Forest Service and Michigan State University

www.emeraldashborer.info

USFS Forest Health Protection

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/foresthealth/index.shtml>