



SUMMIT VIEW

The Newsletter of the Friends of Mt. Agamenticus

Summer 2026

HELP STOP THIS TREE-KILLING PEST, EMERALD ASH BORER



The Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), also known as the EAB, is a destructive invasive pest affecting ash trees. Since being discovered in North America in 2002, it has killed tens of millions of ash trees in multiple states and Canada.

Citizens can help prevent the spread of EAB to new areas by not moving firewood. To find local firewood sources and “buy it where you burn it” visit: <https://www.firewoodscout.org/>.

To view EAB distribution and quarantine maps or report any suspicious beetles (a link on the right opens the Maine Forest Service Tree Ailment Form), please visit the new interactive MFS Invasive Species Dashboard here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c3e50cb4fe0544adbfd5d4ad0261ee3>

EAB is difficult to detect early when pest populations are small because damage to the trees is hidden under the bark and tree decline is gradual. The beetle is well-suited to our climate, is a good flyer, and spreads naturally. People contribute to the long-distance spread of the beetle when they move EAB-infested ash firewood, logs or nursery stock.

This invasive insect can attack and kill healthy ash trees in forests, and urban, suburban and rural settings.



Here's what to look for:

Appearance

EAB adults are metallic green with a coppery-red abdomen and about one-half inch long.

Signs of infestations

EAB larvae burrow into the tree and feed on the inner bark and phloem and creating S-shaped markings. They pupate in winter and emerge as adults in spring, leaving D-shaped exit holes. The adults remain active until the end of summer.

Activity

Adult beetles live for about three weeks. They are most active during the day, particularly when the weather is warm and sunny. To weather storms, they move to protected locations in bark crevices or cling to foliage.

Damage

Symptoms of an infestation may include dead branches near the top of ash trees, excessive branching on tree trunks and vertical cracks in tree bark.

Woodpecker Activity

Woodpeckers peel off the outermost layers of bark and punch their beaks through the remaining bark to eat larvae. If you see an increase in woodpecker activity, you may have EAB-infested trees.

Source: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/eab>; special thanks to Anson Eaglin, Rachel Nyce and their colleagues at USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Michael Parisio, Forest Entomologist, Maine Forest Service for their assistance in compiling the information and images herein.



Solstice

by Tess Taylor

How again today our patron star
whose ancient vista is the long view
turns its wide brightness now and here:
Below, we loll outdoors, sing & make fire.
We build no henge
but after our swim, linger
by the pond. Dapples flicker
pine trunks by the water.
Buzz & hum & wing & song combine.
Light builds a monument to its passing.
Frogs content themselves in bullish chirps,
hoopskirt blossoms
on thimbleberries fall, peeper toads
hop, lazy—
Apex. The throaty world sings ripen.
Our grove slips past the sun's long kiss.
We dress.
We head home in other starlight.
Our earthly time is sweetening from this.

Source: <https://poets.org/poem/solstice-0>

Prairie Warbler

Setophaga discolor

This handsome warbler is quite at home dwelling in the shrubby, regenerative woodland habitat created near the summit of Mount A. The male sings a distinctive song rising in pitch and speed. These warblers use the tangled shrubs and young trees for nesting and glean insects and spiders from leaves and branches.

As of 2025 State of the Birds report lists Prairie warblers as "Yellow Alert/Tipping Point" species – having lost more than 50% of their populations in the past 50 years.



Species Spotlight



Yellow Lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum*)

Yellow lady's-slippers are uncommon in Maine. As the name implies, this species is best identified by the yellow pouch-like flowers that bloom from late May through mid-July. Unlike the pink lady's-slipper, the yellow lady's-slipper has leaves along the stem of the plant and the flower is sometimes fragrant. In Maine, yellow lady's-slippers are found in mesic (moderately moist) nutrient rich forests as well as in bogs and swamps.

Source: <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/about/cypripedium.htm>

BEECH LEAF DISEASE SUMMARY FINDINGS (5.14.26)

American beech trees are a defining part of the Mount Agamenticus forest, and new research shows that even early stages of beech leaf disease (BLD) can affect their health.

BLD is caused by the invasive foliar nematode *Litylenchus crenatae*. The disease was first detected in York County in 2022 and trees already showed reduced carbohydrate storage, which includes the sugars and starches that support growth, defense, and stress recovery.

Bud samples from the site also contained large populations of nematodes, confirming that the pathogen was well established even though leaf symptoms were still mild. Tree ring analysis found that these physiological changes occurred before any measurable decline in radial wood growth.

At a comparison site with several years of BLD, both starch levels and annual wood growth were significantly reduced. Research from long infested stands across the eastern US shows that BLD can eventually lead to tree mortality as energy reserves are depleted over successive years of infection.

Mt. Agamenticus is uniquely valuable for this work. Its long-term monitoring plot provides consistent, high-quality data that allows scientists to track disease progression and tree response over time. These findings contributed directly to regional efforts to understand this emerging disease and support informed management of Maine's beech forests.



Beech Leaf Disease

For more information, see: McIntire, Cameron D., Andrew L. Loyd, Chad M. Rigsby, Patrick Lemis, Elena Karlsen-Ayala, Caitlin Littlejohn, Aaron Bergdahl, and Jeff R. Garnas. "Beech Leaf Disease Impairs Growth and Carbohydrate Storage in *Fagus grandifolia*." *Forest Pathology* 56, no. 2 (2026): e70068.

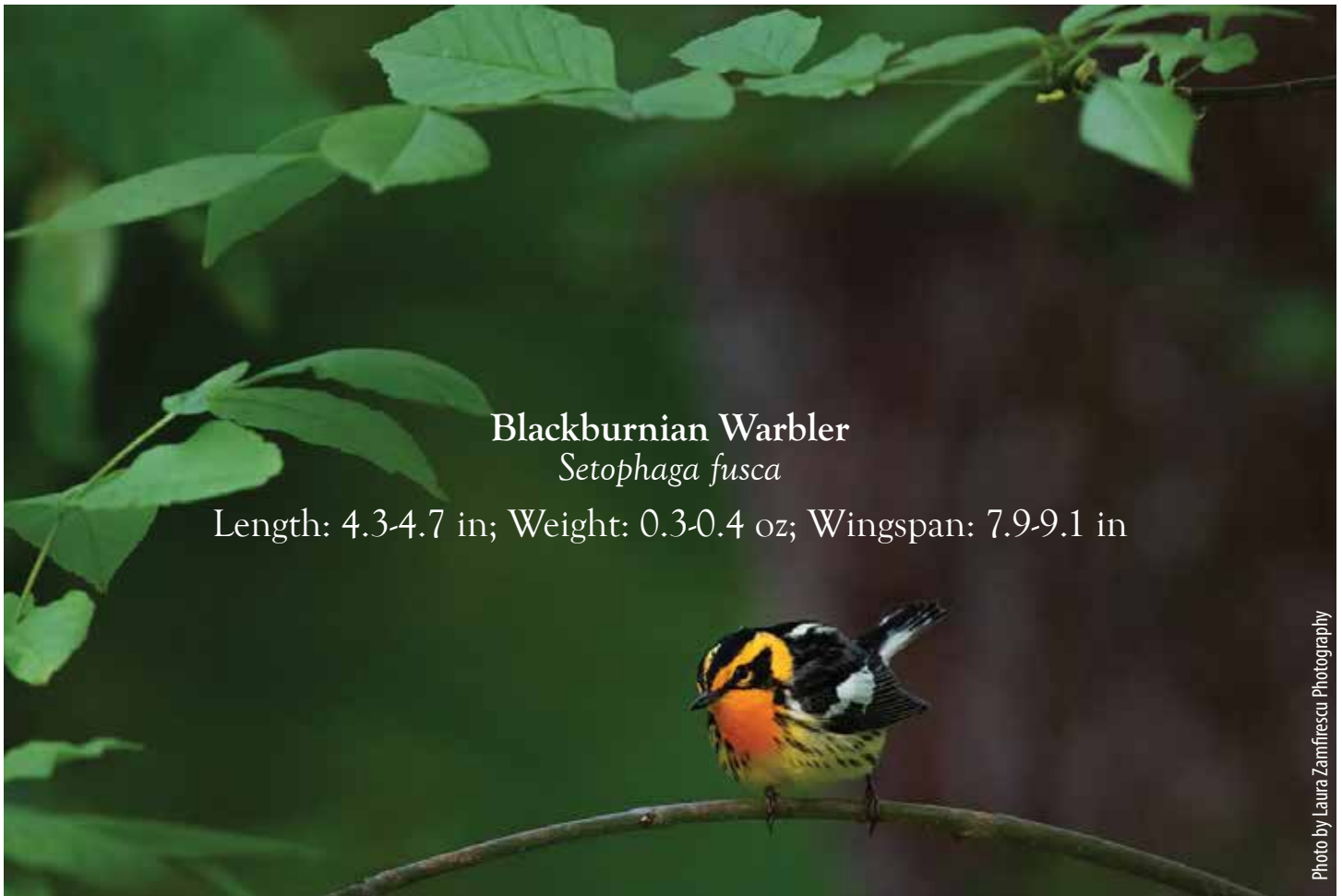


Photo by Laura Zamfirescu Photography

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

Length: 4.3-4.7 in; Weight: 0.3-0.4 oz; Wingspan: 7.9-9.1 in

Blackburnian Warbler – Adult male

I've never forgotten the first time I saw a Blackburnian warbler many summers ago. I was on the southwestern side of Mount A, looking down on the forest canopy, when a friend alerted me to the somewhat metallic, high-pitched song of a breeding male. Remaining still, concentrating on where the song was coming from, we spotted the bird flitting from branch to branch, until it stopped long enough for us to focus binoculars on him. He was in an Eastern hemlock tree. And, oh, what a treat to see that fiery orange face and throat contrasted with the rest of his black and white plumage in an evergreen context! And there was the triangular black eye patch and bejeweled black crown I'd only seen in guidebooks to confirm the sighting. To know that these brilliant gems of feather and hollow bone traveled through volatile skies from the Andes in South America to summer with us here, at Mount A, seems fantastical - a godsend deserving of pause for gratitude. - By DP Johnson, *Friends of Mt. Agamenticus*

Blackburnian Warblers pick insects and their larvae from high in the tops of both coniferous and deciduous trees, where they often search entire branches from base to tip by hopping and creeping along them, looking up at the underside of leaves and inside clumps of dead leaves when present. They also pluck insects from the underside of leaves by hovering (known as "hover-gleaning") and occasionally catch insects in flight.

These forest-canopy specialists are seldom seen at eye level except during migration, when they may be found among dozens of other warbler species at sites that concentrate migrants in spring and fall. They spend winters in South America in open forests including shade-coffee plantations.

Source: Cornell Lab, *All About Birds*, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Blackburnian_Warbler/overview



David Tibbetts



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Woody browse for Porcupines at CFW Supplied by Mt. Agamenticus

Dan Gardoqui, Center for Wildlife's Education & Outreach Director, has been coordinating with Ben Jankowski, Conservation Stewardship Coordinator at Mt. A, to collect woody browse from the summit for the Center's porcupine patients, as well their resident ambassador, Poppy. Porcupines require daily wild browse to meet their nutritional needs. With the active shrubland habitat management efforts on the Mt. A summit, there's ample food to share. It's been a great win-win for both organizations and, more importantly, for all the porcupines!

The Carnivorous Pitcher Plants - By David Tibbetts

There are very few plants in Maine that can capture and digest insects. The largest of our carnivorous flora is the purple pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*). They are usually found growing in peat bogs where the soil is lacking the nutrients the plants need to grow. One of our most ancient plants (roughly 150 million years), they evolved into the sophisticated insect traps we see today. Each pitcher is a leaf with a wide brim at the top and bristly hairs pointing down into the base where rainwater collects. A sticky sap attracts insects and the hairs both direct them down and prevent them from getting out. Once in the water, the plant releases enzymes that help dissolve its prey, and the nutrients are absorbed by the plant. In full sun the leaves turn purple but in total shade they remain green for better photosynthesis. The flower sits atop a long stem high above the pitcher plant leaves that allow pollinators to visit and avoid being drawn into its deadly traps.



David Tibbetts



David Tibbetts

Save the Date! Saturday, September 19th Celebrate ten years of The Mt. A Trail Challenge!

Run, walk, roll or stroll through either our 1 Mile or 5K course starting at the summit of Mount Agamenticus. This challenge is timed the good ol' fashioned way with stop watches, thanks to our local York Highschool Cross Country Team. There are no traditional age category prizes, but there will be a raffle for all participants! As always, all funds raised go right back into Mount A conservation & education efforts. Thank you for your continued support over the last ten years! For more information, go to:

<https://agamenticus.org/annual-trail-challenge/>



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