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The Emerald Ash Borer

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The Emerald Ash Borer

Abstract

An Emerald Ash Borer made from recycled natural materials to create sustainable art.

Keywords

Conservation, Upcycling, Recycling, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Art

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Erratum

Page 2, Paragraph 3: The sentence should read: "For Ohio, the Emerald Ash Borer may mean the loss of over 250 thousand trees."

This reflection is available in The STEAM Journal: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/steam/vol1/iss1/27

The Emerald Ash Borer

Emily Bryant

The Emerald Ash Borer is an invasive beetle from Asia that is devastating ash tree populations in the northeastern United States. This piece was made from pressed invasive plants the artist collected with a research team in the Cleveland Metroparks. The Emerald Ash Borer is part of a series of sustainable art featuring different region-specific invasive species.

This artwork fits the science-art collaboration theme of STEAM through the use of

Emerald Ash Borer, Size: 11X14 inches, Media: Invasive Plants and Plant-Based Glue

sustainable materials and the opportunity to educate viewers on invasive species. All plants collected to make the Emerald Ash Borer are invasive to Ohio and would normally have been sprayed with herbicides, and/or sealed in plastic bags to go to landfills. Using invasive species for art creates the possibility for plants that are detrimental to local environments to be upcycled, reducing landfill waste and the opportunity for these plants to spread to local environments from

damaged waste bags and receptacles. All plants are collaged using non-toxic, plant-based glue because one goal of this artwork is to use more sustainable, non-toxic materials.

The second function of the Emerald Ash Borer as it relates to the science-art collaboration theme of STEAM is to educate viewers on invasive species. Because so many homes in Ohio surround its wilderness areas, educating residents on the impacts of invasive species and how they spread is crucial. Some of Ohio's invasive species came from the properties of local residents who purchased invasive species for their gardens. The science of invasive species can be complex, but presenting information visually through art can enhance viewers' understanding of the subject matter and increase community involvement. Not only can viewers learn about the Emerald Ash Borer through this artwork, but they can also learn about several species of invasive plants and what their leaves look like. As many of Ohio's Ash Trees have died and fallen down, other invasive plants used in this collage have out-competed native plants for the light and space previously occupied by Ash Trees.

The Emerald Ash Borer also features chewed Ash Tree leaves, educating individuals on what the cost of this invasive species will be in their community and state. For Ohio, the Emerald Ash Borer may mean the loss of over 250 million trees. The presentation of this artwork, especially in a scientific or educational facility, provides the opportunity to educate individuals on the dangers of moving firewood as it relates to the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, as well as the importance of planting non-invasive plants. The piece encourages creativity in the scientific community, the use of natural and sustainable materials in art, and dialogue between scientists and local residents. Relationships between scientists and local communities are especially important because residents provide financial support for research initiatives and make valuable contributions through volunteerism.

Emily Bryant was born near Cleveland, Ohio. While completing degrees in sustainability and art at Baldwin-Wallace College, Emily began utilizing sustainable materials to produce art with environmental messages. Focusing on the impact of native and invasive species in local ecosystems, Emily hopes to inspire others to explore and conserve nature. Emily Bryant is a Sustainability Specialist and Artist, her work is available to view here: etsy.com/shop/TheScoffPatch