

Rosebud Decks & Porches Issues Design Guidance for Yards Losing Tree Canopy

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Rosebud Decks & Porches has issued design guidance for homeowners whose properties have lost mature tree canopy, following continued expansion of emerald ash borer across Minnesota.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reports that emerald ash borer has been confirmed in 59 of the state's 87 counties, including six new counties added in 2025. The University of Minnesota reports that Minnesota holds the highest volume of ash trees of any state, and all native ash species are susceptible to the insect. Infestation is considered established throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area, where municipal removal programs have operated for several years.

The company said the consequence for outdoor living spaces receives comparatively little attention. A backyard shaded by mature ash for three decades can shift to full afternoon exposure within a single season once that tree is removed, leaving a deck surface that was selected for conditions no longer present.

"A homeowner will often bring in a photograph of a deck they admired, and it turns out that deck sits in shade," said Joseph Becker, owner of Rosebud Decks & Porches. "The same board in an open yard behaves differently. It is not a better or worse product. It is a different set of conditions, and the selection has to answer the conditions that will actually exist after the trees come out."

According to Becker, sun exposure influences several decisions that are easy to overlook during planning. Surface temperature under sustained direct light varies between products and between colors within a single product line, with darker tones generally absorbing more heat than lighter ones in the same conditions. Manufacturers publish performance information for individual product lines, and Becker said homeowners planning for a newly exposed yard should review that documentation for the specific line under consideration rather than relying on general comparisons between material categories.

Color appearance changes as well. A sample evaluated indoors or under the remaining canopy may not resemble the installed result across an open yard in direct afternoon light. Becker said the practical step is to view samples outdoors in the location where the deck will sit, at the time of day the space will be used most.

Composite and PVC lines vary in both color range and surface texture, and texture affects how a board reads visually and how it feels underfoot in exposed conditions. Wood carries its own considerations, with pressure-treated lumber, cedar and hardwood species weathering at different rates under sustained ultraviolet exposure and requiring different finishing schedules.

Tree removal also changes conditions below grade. Stump grinding disturbs soil in the immediate area, and decaying root systems can leave voids as they break down over subsequent years. Both affect bearing conditions where footings may be placed, and both are more easily addressed during design than after construction.

Becker said the site assessment that precedes a build should account for the yard as it will exist rather than as it appears at the moment of the consultation. Where removals are planned but not yet complete, that means anticipating the exposure and ground conditions that will follow rather than designing to current shade.

Canopy loss occasionally reframes a project entirely. The company said homeowners who lose established shade sometimes reconsider whether an open deck still suits how they want to use the space, and evaluate porch construction with a roof structure as an alternative that restores overhead cover. A pergola offers a middle option, providing partial shade across a seating or dining area while leaving the space open.

The company said replanting and deck planning are worth considering together where both are underway. A newly planted replacement tree will not restore meaningful shade for many years, which affects both material selection and where overhead structures make sense in the interim.

Homeowners can review current emerald ash borer distribution through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, which maintains county-level confirmation data and quarantine information. University of Minnesota Extension publishes identification resources covering symptoms and treatment options. Many metropolitan municipalities publish forestry information addressing ash removal, replanting programs and requirements applying to trees on private property.

Rosebud Decks & Porches is a custom deck and porch builder serving the Twin Cities metropolitan area and western Wisconsin. The company designs and builds residential and commercial decks in composite, PVC and wood, and provides deck framing, deck repair, porch construction, pergolas, railing and deck lighting. It has specialized in deck and porch construction since 2018.

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Rosebud Decks & Porches

Rosebud Decks & Porches is a certified deck building specialist based in Eden Prairie, serving the Twin Cities southwest metro and surrounding communities. We design and build custom decks, porches, pergolas, privacy walls, and railing systems

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