

Emerald Ash Borer Found in Washington County; Quarantine Now in Effect

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MADISON—The tiny, green beetle responsible for killing ash trees in several Midwest states has now been detected in Washington County, not far from Wisconsin's first confirmed case of emerald ash borer in neighboring Ozaukee County. Three adult beetles were found on August 1 stuck to a purple EAB trap located in Fireman's Park in the village of Newburg.

A federal laboratory in Romulus, Mich. confirmed that the beetles were emerald ash borer and notified state authorities on Wednesday afternoon.

“It's not surprising that one of the purple, sticky traps caught these beetles in Newburg,” said Jennifer Statz, EAB Program manager with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. “The location is very close to Wisconsin's first confirmed case of EAB, and several ash trees in Fireman's Park have the tell-tale signs of EAB infestation.”

Last week, state officials were notified that insect samples from a private woodlot in nearby Ozaukee County, in the Town of Saukville, were emerald ash borer.

The adult emerald ash borer is a metallic green insect about one-half inch long and one-eighth inch wide. The adults lay eggs deep in the crevices of ash tree bark. The larvae hatching from the eggs eat their way through the fluid-conducting vessels under the tree's bark, essentially cutting off the flow of nutrients in the tree, leading to the decline and eventual death of the tree.

EAB is native to Asia and is believed to have arrived in North America in the 1990s via shipping containers.

As part of the state and federal response to the Wisconsin infestation, DATCP and partners representing the Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin and UW-Extension, USDA APHIS and Forest Service, and numerous county and municipal governments, will begin the task of surveying the area surrounding the known infestations in an effort to determine the extent of the beetle's presence in southeast Wisconsin. Recommending a management strategy will follow when the survey is complete.

EAB Quarantine Established

The two counties where emerald ash borer has been confirmed, along with two additional neighboring counties, have been placed under quarantine in an effort to help prevent the human-aided spread of EAB.

The quarantine includes all of Ozaukee, Washington, Fond du Lac and Sheboygan counties. The purpose of the quarantine is to limit the artificial spread of emerald ash borers which may be present in ash nursery stock, hardwood firewood, timber or other articles that could spread EAB into other areas of Wisconsin or other states.

The quarantine will affect plant nurseries, firewood dealers, lumber mills, arborists, pallet manufacturers and homeowners within the four-county area.

“Establishing this quarantine is an important first-step to combat EAB,” explained Bob Dahl, plant protection section chief with DATCP. “EAB can travel only so far on its own, but the beetle can travel great distances if it is unknowingly transported inside logs, mulch or firewood.”

Although the presence of EAB has so far only been confirmed in Ozaukee and Washington counties, the neighboring counties were added because of their proximity to the known locations of EAB and to address some practical issues related to the handling of wood waste from those two counties.

“Quarantined areas need to be large enough so the items of concern, such as ash tree trimmings, dead trees, wood chips or wood waste can be handled and processed without significant costs to municipalities,” Dahl said. “It may be more cost effective to move approved items into the neighboring county for handling and processing.”

The size of the infestation is still unknown so including neighboring counties errs on the side of caution, Dahl explained.

Nurseries in quarantined counties will not be able to move ash nursery stock to non-quarantined counties or states because there is currently no way to treat the trees with 100 percent guaranteed success.

“This shouldn’t be a hardship for most nurseries as many have already cut back or stopped raising ash because of the declining demand for it,” Dahl said.

Violating the quarantine is a criminal action and may result in a fine of up to \$200, six months in jail, or both. If regulated materials cross the state line, federal penalties begin at \$1,000.

For lumber mills, firewood dealers and pallet manufacturers, businesses will be required to follow approved handling methods to prevent the spread of EAB on wood items. This might include debarking, fumigation, kiln-drying or other approved procedures. In

addition, the department will inspect and certify the products to be free of EAB before the wood products could move out of the quarantined area.

Wisconsin residents and visitors to the state can help prevent the spread of EAB and learn more about this invasive pest in several ways:

- Follow all quarantine guidelines. For many people, that will mean not moving firewood out of the quarantined area.
- Learn about the signs and symptoms of EAB infestation, including the characteristics of an infested tree. This information can be found at the Wisconsin EAB Program Web site at www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov.
- Report suspicious ash trees or request information by calling the Wisconsin EAB Program hotline toll-free at 1-800-462-2803.

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