

ILLINOIS

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Emerald ash borer spreads across Illinois



Nat Williams Agri News, Friday, October 24, 2014 9:00 AM

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — As foresters have long warned, the emerald ash borer is spreading quickly across Illinois, even into the southern portion of the state.

The insect pest has been confirmed in 14 new counties, including five located outside the state quarantine zone, reported Warren Goetsch, chief of environmental programs with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Goetsch said the quarantine boundaries will be amended to include the new areas where the beetles have been captured in specially designed traps. The new counties include Logan, Menard, Perry, Sangamon and Williamson. Perry and Williamson counties are in southern Illinois, indicating a broad coverage of the devastating pest.

Beetles were identified earlier this year in Tazewell and Peoria counties, also outside the original quarantine zone.

Native to Asia, the emerald ash borer was brought into the U.S. and first detected in 2002 in Michigan. Foresters estimate it has killed more than 250 million trees nationwide.

The tiny beetle often is difficult to detect, especially in newly infested trees. Its larvae burrow into the bark of ash trees, causing the trees to starve and eventually die. Signs of infestation include thinning and yellowing leaves, D-shaped holes in the bark of the trunk or branches and basal shoots.

Widespread Effect

The outbreak has the potential to affect homeowners, farmers, foresters and municipalities. Stephanie Brown, executive director of the Illinois Forestry Resource Council, said that the popularity of ash trees magnifies the threat.

“It’s a devastating problem, because people love their trees,” she said. “We sure hate to lose them. They tend to have straight trunks, and they could potentially produce a lot of material. But having them out in the woods is good, too. Ash trees have a nice form.”

The hardwood has a number of specialty uses, particularly in the manufacture of baseball bats. It also is used for musical instruments, including drum bodies and some electric guitars.

If the disease continues to spread, it could affect the look of neighborhoods

“Where you’re going to see more impact is where you have street tree situations,” Brown said.

“It’s considered a nice tree, and a lot were planted in cities. When you plant more of a particular species than others, you run the risk if there is a problem of widespread loss.”

Brown also is concerned about the effect of the pest on idled farmland placed into the Conservation Reserve Program or the Wetlands Reserve Program.

"There are CRP and WRP tree plantings that are 20 to 25 years old now," she said. "It would be interesting to see if they're going to be impacted.

"Fortunately, for many years our state and district foresters have been recommending mixed hardwood plantings. Ash trees have been a favorite go-to species, dating back before we didn't realize that EAB was going to be a problem."

Quarantine Zone

The state quarantine zone includes 49 counties and is intended to prevent the artificial or "human-assisted" spread of the beetle through the movement of potentially infested wood and nursery stock. Specifically, conservation officials warn of the moving of all firewood, which usually still has bark.

"A lot of people, unfortunately, move firewood," Brown said. "During hunting season, people come down (to southern Illinois) to hunt and they don't want to mess with cutting firewood when they get down here, so they'll throw some on the trailer and bring it in.

"It's a huge problem. It can be spread on any kind of (ash) wood that's got the bark on it. Firewood obviously does. People generally aren't paying attention to what species of firewood they're bringing, so they could bring some ash along."

Prevention is about the only strategy for curtailing the disease.

"There's not a lot we can do to stop it," Brown said. "It makes more financial sense to double down and try to stop the insect from spreading by treating trees chemically. If you've got a high-value tree in your yard and you don't want to lose it, you might want to contact an arborist. In a forest setting it wouldn't make financial sense to do anything other than capture the value of the wood before it's compromised."

INDIANA

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20141026/FEAT0106/310269980/1011/FEAT>

Ash borer finds new target for attacking

Ricky Kemery Journal Gazette (IN), October 26, 2014 at 3:00 a.m.

Q. Can you discuss what is happening with invasive pests such as emerald ash borer?

A. Unfortunately, the news is not good. Just recently, several white fringe trees were found by a professor at Wright State University near Dayton that had been attacked by emerald ash borer. This is disturbing news because this pest was thought to attack only ash trees.

The white fringe tree is a native species found primarily in the Southeastern United States from New Jersey to Louisiana.

The fringe tree is an unusual small shrub or tree not widely used or found in the wild in our area. It is sometimes referred to as Old Man's Beard because the clusters of fragrant white blossoms dangle from threadlike stems in great silken clusters (hence the name) in late spring. Female specimens produce blue-black fruits in autumn.

The fringe tree, like our ash trees, is a member of the olive family. Scientists are now concerned that the ash borer might begin to feed on other members of this large plant family when ash trees begin to be in short supply.

The specimens collected on fringe trees in Ohio were in areas where the abundance of dead ash trees suggest that local populations of the borer were high.

Other members of the olive family include lilac, forsythia and privet – just to name a few. The ability of the ash borer to move to the fringe tree could indicate a potential for this pest to move to other plant members of the olive family, including lilac and privet.

Research conducted in the 2000s tested other members of the olive family and found that the ash borer was unable to complete its life cycle on these hosts. To date, despite the loss of more than 50 million ash trees in areas where lilac, privet and fringe trees are grown, no other observations of potential host shifting have been reported.

It is also important to note that other boring insects attack these species. Lilac borer, for instance, is fairly common in our area, especially on lilacs subject to environmental stress.

Universities such as Purdue University are feverishly studying the ash borer and looking for new ways to control this pest.

For now, don't panic. People should continue to educate themselves on the symptoms of ash borer infestation, which are specific compared to other insect damage. You'll find useful information online using the search term "emerald ash borer Purdue."

Scout your landscapes occasionally and look for suspicious damage that correlates with ash borer injury. Remember that D-shaped exit holes and serpentine tunnels under the bark are key features of emerald ash borer attack.

Commercial landscapers who grow fringe trees or other members of the olive family should inspect their plants for suspicious damage.

The Plant Medic, written by Ricky Kemery, appears every other Sunday. Kemery is the extension educator for horticulture at the Allen County branch of the Purdue Extension Service.

WISCONSIN

http://www.wiscnews.com/news/local/article_37dfcb94-8eb6-5517-b54c-e7f9838eb342.html?comment_form=true

Stewards seek projects

By Jason Cuevas WISC News (WI), October 24, 2014 12:53 pm

With money already set aside for a conservation easement, the Stewards of the Dells of the Wisconsin River are looking for a new project.

The group discussed options at its meeting Wednesday.

Debbie Kinder, Stewards president, said the board officers recently met and brainstormed a few ideas to bring to the group as a whole.

Easton Dreher, Stewards member-at-large, said the first ideas focused on the Birchcliff Hiking Trail, in the Dells Natural Area. It is off River Road. The first concern about the trail is it has no bathrooms. A possible project would be providing an outhouse of some kind.

Adding signage to the trail to explain where it goes and what people can see on the way was suggested. Garbage also continues to be an issue on the trail.

Dreher said he sometimes takes a bag out and picks up garbage and other Stewards may want to do the same. Kinder said perhaps installing a station with garbage bags would be a good idea.

The nature trail to Sunset Cliff by Witches' Gulch was discussed in regards to adding a small trail to the overlook. Dreher suggested having a barrier fence to keep people from being too close to the edge and away from the boats line of sight.

The final suggestion was incorporating a nonmotorized boat launch by the Illinois Avenue bridge. The stewards decided to make this project the priority due to time constraints. The city will soon start a rebuilding the bridge, which would be a good time to add the launch nearby. The Stewards will make contact with the BID committee and Parks, Recreation and Waterway committee and see if anything can be done. The Stewards would take care of the funding for the project.

After discussion of possible future projects, the Stewards heard from two local non-profits. Chris Swart has started the Urban Forestry Initiative. He takes locally generated waste products and uses them for community benefit. Swart has been collecting coffee grounds, tea bags and filters from both local McDonalds. He has collected over 12,000 pounds and used it for compost. The compost is being used to grow plants and trees with 100 already started. The plants have been grown in buckets donated by Monk's at the Wilderness and Cheesecake Heaven. The ultimate goal of the organization is to eventually have a privately run park. The park would be of plants and trees fertilized by community waste. More information can be found by visiting Urban Forestry Initiative on Facebook.

Will Meissner has started Assist Wisconsin. The organization's goal is to remove the barriers keeping the disabled from experiencing the attractions of the Dells. Meissner showed a video of him literally carrying a man on his back up a nature trail.

The group has already started with some work and currently has around 8 – 10 volunteers. He said many of the nature areas in the area are not very handicapped accessible. Assist Wisconsin finds ways to get around those obstacles.

Those interested in more information can visit the Facebook page Assist WI.

A way the Stewards could earn some money is by creating and selling a river map. The map would have points of interest marked so visitors could use it while going down the river in paddle boats or other slower water craft.

Each fall, trees offer homeowners a bounty of free mulch

Jill Richardson for Lacrosse Tribune (WI), October 22, 2014 8:00 am

This time of year, your trees are sending you a message.

Although I grew up in the Midwest, I'm experiencing it anew. After spending eight blissful years in California, I've returned to a state where people wear hats shaped like cheese and where leaves turn colors and drop off the trees.

I'm not completely ignorant of the weather here in Wisconsin. I remember having to pick a Halloween costume that could fit over a heavy jacket when I was a kid, and I know to expect the first snowflakes around the first week of November.

I'm also well aware that I need to purchase an ice scraper and a brush for my car's windshield rather soon — and that I'll have to use them regularly until at least March.

But my childhood experiences in the frigid north had little to do with yard work. Except for the times I was forced — very much against my will — to mow the lawn, I got off scot-free. The leaves fell from the trees, then the leaves went away. Someone else got rid of them — grown-ups, I suspect — and I didn't know where they went.

Playing in leaf piles was something I did as a kid. Raking leaves was not.

As an adult, I now see the bounty of leaves the trees are heaping on my street through a gardener's eyes. These leaves are a gift.

Trees, it turns out, are strategic in their leaf shedding. Fallen leaves decompose to feed fungi that in turn nourish tree roots. So our trees are, in effect, making their own mulch and dumping it all over the very spot most beneficial to them: their root zones.

Unfortunately, to a suburban homeowner eager to get a head start on next summer's manicured lawn, mounds of dead leaves are unsightly. Mulch is a bagged product you might buy, or have delivered in a pickup, and it must stay within a garden bed lined with plastic or bordered with bricks. It's not something some tree ought to dump all over your yard.

For cities, the problem goes beyond aesthetics: Leaves that fall in the street can clog storm drains. So each fall, millions of homeowners clear their lawns of leaves and local governments then dispose of them.

Where do all these leaves go? If we threw them all away, leaves and other yard trimmings would account for 13.5 percent of all the trash in our landfills. Fortunately, over half of this yard waste is diverted away — for example, into composting programs.

Some cities, like my new hometown of Madison, take care of the composting for their residents. They only ask that we rake our leaves into piles on the curb for pick-up. Fort Collins, Colo., goes one step beyond that, connecting the people who want leaves with others who want to get rid of them.

But that's not true everywhere. Thanks to budget cuts, New York City's leaves are headed for the trash.

Most cities, even those with composting programs, instruct residents that the best thing to do with your leaves is to leave them be. If you don't want leafy mulch covering your lawn, place your foliage in a compost pile, or run it over with the mower. Nature will take care of it by spring.

Your trees will thank you.

Columnist Jill Richardson is the author of *Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It*.