



NEWS

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EMERALD ASH BORER DISCOVERED IN MCLEAN COUNTY

Tree-killing beetle caught in EAB monitoring trap located in Bloomington

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – A destructive beetle responsible for killing millions of ash trees in North America has been discovered in McLean County, the southernmost detection of the pest in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture said today it has received confirmation that two beetles collected late last week in Bloomington are adult emerald ash borers. The beetles were caught in an EAB trap located in an industrial area on the southwest side of Bloomington. Hundreds of the distinctive, purple traps were placed this year throughout a 100-mile band across the northern half of Illinois, where the beetle was first discovered in the state, and downstate at sites deemed to be at high risk of beetle infestation.

“Our staff now will survey ash trees in the surrounding area to determine the size of the infestation,” Acting Agriculture Director Tom Jennings said. “That information will be helpful when we consider adjustments to the boundaries of the quarantine we established to slow the spread of this pest.”

The emerald ash borer is a small, metallic-green beetle native to Asia. Its larvae burrow into the bark of ash trees, causing the trees to starve and eventually die. While the beetle does not pose any direct risk to public health, it does threaten the tree population. Since the emerald ash borer was first confirmed in the Midwest in the summer of 2002, it has killed more than 30 million ash trees.

McLean is the seventh county in Illinois with a confirmed infestation of emerald ash borer. Previous detections were made in Kane, Cook, LaSalle, DuPage, Will and McHenry counties.

All or parts of the 18 northeastern-most Illinois counties currently are under quarantine to prevent the accidental spread of the beetle. The quarantine prohibits the intrastate movement of potentially-contaminated wood products, including ash trees, limbs and branches and all types of firewood. In addition, the entire states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan have been placed under a federal quarantine. It prohibits the interstate movement of these same products.

The emerald ash borer is difficult to detect, especially in newly-infested trees. Citizens should watch for metallic-green beetles about half the diameter of a penny on or near ash trees that are showing signs of disease or stress. Other signs of infestation in ash trees include D-shaped holes in the bark of the trunk or branches and shoots growing from its base. The Illinois Department of Agriculture urges that all tree removal companies enter into compliance with the department. The department also encourages citizens to only hire vendors who are in compliance. Anyone who suspects a tree has been infested is urged to contact either their county Extension office or village forester. For more information, visit www.IllinoisEAB.com on the internet.

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