



NEWS

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NEW EMERALD ASH BORER INFESTATION CONFIRMED

Tree-killing beetle discovered at a highway rest area in Iroquois County

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – A destructive pest that feasts on ash trees has been discovered in Iroquois County. An infestation of emerald ash borer (EAB) was found just north of Loda at a highway rest area along Interstate 57, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced today.

State and federal EAB field workers made the discovery. They observed about a dozen distressed ash trees near the rest area on the southbound side of the interstate and notified their superiors, who collected larvae from the trees and submitted them to the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which then confirmed the specimens as EAB.

“Ash trees on the other side of the highway also show signs of infestation. We'd like to see them all removed and chipped before adult beetles begin to emerge later this spring and have a chance to spread,” Warren Goetsch, IDOA bureau chief of Environmental Programs, said.

“Plans are to place surveillance traps throughout not only Iroquois County, but also neighboring Ford, Champaign and Vermilion counties to determine whether this infestation is isolated.”

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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 25 million ash trees.

All or parts of the 21 counties in the northern and central parts of Illinois 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.

“Iroquois County is just outside the current quarantine boundaries,” Goetsch said. “The quarantine includes McLean and Livingston counties to the west and Kankakee County to the north, but not Iroquois. An adjustment obviously will need to be made to account for this new detection. We’d like to make that decision in the next few weeks so the new boundaries are in place before adult emergence begins near the end of May.”

Iroquois is the twelfth Illinois county with a confirmed EAB infestation. Previous detections were made in Bureau, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, McHenry, McLean and Will counties.

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.

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.