

Emerald Ash Borer Survey – Texas – 2010

Texas Agrilife Extension, an agency of the Texas A&M System, in cooperation with the USDA-APHIS, and the Texas Department of Agriculture, is seeking your assistance in conducting a survey to determine if the emerald ash borer is present in Texas.

Background:

The emerald ash borer is an exotic beetle that has become a pest of ash trees in the U.S. Over the past few years, it has slowly spread from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and surrounding states to other parts of the Midwest. It most likely entered the U.S. from its natural range in the Far East in ash wood used to stabilize cargo in ships, or in wood used for packing or crating heavy consumer products.

Adult emerald ash borers are metallic green, ½ inch long and 1/8 inch wide. (Fig 1). Adult beetles can fly at least ½ mile from an infested tree when they emerge. Many infestations are started when infested nursery ash trees, logs, or firewood are brought into non-infested areas. The larvae (Fig.2), the destructive stage of the pest, feed in the phloem layer between the bark and the sapwood. The canopy of an infected tree begins to thin above infected portions of the trunk and major branches as the larvae disrupt the natural flow of the phloem and xylem immediately under the bark (Fig 3). Heavily infested trees exhibit canopy die-back, usually starting at the top of the tree with 1/3 to ½ of the branches dying within 1 to 2 years. (Fig. 4)

Objectives of our study:

1. Determine if emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is present but undetected in ash (*Fraxinus spp.*) species in Texas.
2. Develop benchmark data for future surveys to determine possible expansion of this pest in Texas.
3. Increase public awareness of: a) risk of transporting firewood and other wood products infested with emerald ash borer, and b) proper identification of emerald ash borers and damage caused by feeding larvae.

Survey Procedures:

Monitoring traps will be placed at various parks, campgrounds and private lands containing ash trees. The purple, triangular-shaped traps are approximately 24" X 14". Traps are coated with non-toxic glue, and are baited with a scented lure to attract adult beetles (Fig. 5). Each trap, identified with a DO NOT DISTURB label and contact information, will be placed in or near ash trees and will be at least 5 feet above ground level. No more than 4 traps will be placed at any one location. Traps will be monitored monthly and will be removed at the end of the survey in September or October.

Contact Information:

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Fig. 1 Emerald ash borer adult.



Fig. 2. Ash borer larva feeding between bark and hardwood.



Fig. 3. Ash borer feeding galleries under bark.



Fig. 4. Ash tree displaying symptoms of “die back” from ash borer.



Fig. 5. Emerald ash borer “sticky” trap installed in tree.