

Multiple new EAB infestations found in Twin Cities

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ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has confirmed three new emerald ash borer (EAB) infestations, one in Minneapolis, and two in St. Paul. The Minneapolis find is in Lakewood Cemetery near the intersection of King’s Highway and 38th Street. The St. Paul finds are near the intersection of Lexington Parkway and Jessamine Avenue, and along Pig’s Eye Lake Road east across the Mississippi River from the St. Paul Downtown Airport.

On January 29, 30 and 31 the Minnesota Department of Agriculture followed up on suspected EAB infested trees reported by the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board Forestry Department and the St. Paul City Forestry Unit. The sites were discovered due to the presence of ash trees with woodpecker feeding, which is a good external symptom of insect activity. The trees were confirmed as EAB-infested by removing sections of bark to reveal the insects distinctive “S” shaped tunneling on the surface of the wood. MDA Officials say finding such infested trees in the winter is far easier when the branches and trunk are exposed, compared to during the summer when the leaves can disguise the symptoms.

“The discovery of these new sites is disappointing, but it is noteworthy that all three sites remain contained within the existing metro quarantine of Ramsey and Hennepin counties,” said MDA Entomologist, Mark Abrahamson. “It is also encouraging that these cities have staff with sufficient expertise to identify infestations before tree decline is evident. Based on our experience with other sites, these trees have probably been infested for three or four years.”

Abrahamson says both cities are aggressively working to limit damage from EAB and discovering new infestations is a key component of that effort.

Emerald ash borer is one of America’s most destructive tree pests, having killed tens of millions of ash trees in 18 states. Its larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree’s nutrients. Infestation signs include one-eighth inch, D-shaped exit holes in ash tree bark and winding tunnels under the bark.

The biggest risk of spreading EAB comes from people unknowingly moving firewood or other ash products harboring larvae. There are three easy steps Minnesotans can take to keep EAB from spreading:

- Don’t transport firewood. Buy and burn local firewood to prevent movement of EAB.
- If you live in a quarantined county, be aware of the restrictions on movement of products such as ash trees, wood chips, and firewood. Details can be found online at www.mda.state.mn.us/eab.
- Watch your ash trees for infestation. If you think your ash tree is infested, contact MDA at arrest.the.pest@state.mn.us or 888-545-6684 (voicemail) to report concerns.

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