

Missouri confirms new cases of tree pest

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The new cases were in Chariton, Lafayette and Moniteau counties. The emerald ash borer is a small, metallic green beetle native to Asia that results in killing more than 99% of the trees it attacks.

The beetle has been found in Northwest Missouri counties including Andrew, Nodaway and Buchanan.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, the beetle was first discovered in Detroit, Michigan, in 2002. The insects are believed to have entered the country on wooden packing materials from China. The young bore into the trees and feed under the bark, which disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients.

Robbie Doerhoff, conservation department forest entomologist, said one of the best ways to keep track of the emerald ash borer and its march across Missouri is to look for bark blanding.

"When an ash tree is infested with EAB larvae, woodpeckers often remove portions of the bark while searching for the insects, revealing light-colored inner bark that is highly noticeable," Doerhoff said.

"Trees with bark blanding are often the first clue that EAB is in a new area."

The conservation department has received dozens of reports this winter of ash trees with bark blanding, which is a sign that emerald ash borer populations are increasing rapidly across the state.

"In some areas, nearly every ash tree has bark blanding from the ground to the upper branches, indicating EAB populations are high and that most ash trees will be dead in a year or two," Doerhoff said.

He said emerald ash borer will likely be found statewide within the next few years. The department urges Missourians with ash trees in their yard to make a plan now to either remove those trees or treat them with an insecticide.

Ash trees typically show a pattern of declining health for two to four years before being killed by emerald ash borers. Woodpecker damage, sprouts growing from the main trunk and major branch loss can all suggest emerald ash borers are present.

“Trees with significant bark blanding or branch dieback often aren’t good candidates for insecticide treatments, so make a plan to remove those trees as soon as possible,” Doerhoff said.

He said those have ash trees in their yard that appeared healthy last fall, should treat them this spring or early summer.

“Make sure you know what insecticide you or your arborist is using,” Doerhoff said. “Not all chemicals are effective or recommended, and treatment options vary by tree size.”

He said felled ash trees should be disposed of locally to prevent the accidental spread of emerald ash borers to new locations.

The conservation department encourages residents to not remove firewood. Emerald ash borers can emerge from ash firewood and logs for up to two years after harvest, so they recommend campers buy firewood near where they plan to burn it.

The conservation department encourages Missourians to report possible emerald ash borer infestations in counties where the pest has not yet been confirmed. Reports can be made by using the online form at eab.missouri.edu or by calling the Forest Pest Hotline at 866-716-9974.

Source: https://www.newspressnow.com/sports/outdoors/missouri-confirms-new-cases-of-tree-pest/article_e6f5648-7a92-11ea-9de2-7fa54781f95e.html