

DATCP EAB Survey Set to Begin

by Mick Skwarok, 608-224-4745

MADISON – The winter survey for the emerald ash borer (EAB) in Wisconsin is about to begin, with crews gearing up to sample ash trees in 44 counties. The work is a follow-up to the EAB survey that the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection began last December. To date, the tiny green beetle that destroys ash trees has not been detected in Wisconsin.

Beginning Nov. 19, workers will start felling the first of 1,240 public or right-of-way trees that were girdled last year and left standing as detection trees. Those trees had a ring of bark removed in a process called “girdling,” which stresses the tree and makes it more attractive to EAB if it’s in the area. After the detection trees have been felled, they’ll be moved to a central location in the county, then peeled and inspected for signs of EAB.

The 44 counties included in the survey area are: Adams, Brown, Calumet, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Door, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Iron, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, Kewaunee, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marathon, Marinette, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Oconto, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Portage, Price, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Shawano, Sheboygan, Vernon, Vilas, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago and Wood. In some counties, only selected communities or other areas of interest such as wood mills or rest areas will be surveyed.

Brown, Dane and Kenosha counties are scheduled to be the first surveyed. Survey work should be complete near the end of April, 2008.

In cooperation with a number of municipalities, DATCP surveyors have identified several hundred public trees to be girdled in the spring as part of next season’s survey. However, the final number of trees used next year will depend upon the results and evaluation of new, non-destructive trapping methods and recommendations from national experts.

“Since last season’s survey, EAB has shown up in additional locations in infested states and in some new states as well,” said Adrian Barta, EAB program coordinator with DATCP. “If it’s here in Wisconsin, we want to find it as early as possible. The younger the infestation, the better chance we have of successfully managing the problem, with more options to choose from.”

There are an estimated 727 million ash trees in Wisconsin forests. In urban settings, ash varieties represent about 20 percent (approximately 5 million) of all trees.

The emerald ash borer, an exotic beetle native to Asia, has been responsible for the loss of an estimated 25 million ash trees in the United States since its introduction. The beetle was first detected in Detroit, Mich., in 2002. It’s currently known to exist in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia and Ontario, Canada. A federal quarantine is now in place in those infested areas to restrict the movement of hardwood firewood, including ash and other ash products such as ash nursery stock or timber.

For more information about EAB or the DATCP survey, visit emeraldashborer.wi.gov or call the toll-free Wisconsin EAB hotline at 1-800-462-2803.