Emerald Ash Borer Found in Salem, New Hampshire

Sep 23, 2014

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Public information meeting scheduled for October 9 in Brentwood

BRENTWOOD, N.H. – The Emerald ash borer (EAB) has made its way to Salem, New Hampshire. Though it only infests ash trees, it's considered the most destructive forest pest in North America. It kills infested ash trees within three to five years unless preventative steps are taken.

A public informational meeting about EAB and the quarantine takes place October 9 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the Hilton Auditorium at the Rockingham County Nursing Home on William Sturtevant Way off North Road in Brentwood.

EAB was first detected in New Hampshire in the spring of 2013 when an infested tree was identified in Concord. Since that initial detection, it's been found in Bow, Canterbury, and Loudon, and there is a quarantine of Merrimack County. Connecticut and Massachusetts are two other New England states with infestations.

EAB is spread by people moving firewood, nursery stock, and wood products. Any new find of EAB results in a quarantine to restrict the insects' movement while facilitating continued trade in ash products.

The detection of EAB in Salem will add Rockingham County and parts of Hillsborough County to the quarantine. The parts of Hillsborough County added to the quarantine are east of the Everett Turnpike and the Route 293 loop around Manchester—including the highways themselves. This includes all or portions of the Hillsborough County towns of Pelham, Hudson, Nashua, Litchfield, Merrimack, Bedford, and Manchester. The new boundaries of the quarantine go in effect on October 9.

Piera Siegert, state entomologist with the Dept. of Agriculture, Markets and Food says, “The detection of EAB in Salem isn’t a surprise given its proximity to Massachusetts and the propensity of people to move this pest. EAB is a very difficult pest to detect and we’ve been looking for it in this area for the past year. Input from the public regarding ash trees in decline is always appreciated, as it can help us determine how widespread the EAB problem is.”

Siegert advises communities and residents to evaluate their trees and woodlots, looking for ash, and research their options for chemical treatment or removal. “If you are in or near a town with a known EAB population, it is time to initiate chemical treatments of trees to get the biggest impact.”

Kyle Lombard, forest health specialist with the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands agrees with Siegert, “As anticipated, we found adult EAB in Salem while taking down our pheromone traps. The outbreak in North Andover was so close that natural spread from flying insects was bound to happen this year. Now, Salem residents can do the state a great service by not moving firewood outside of the county. If spread is restricted to insects’ natural flights, it gives us many more years to study and develop control methods that could potentially mitigate this pest before the vast ash resources in central New Hampshire are devastated.”

At the October 9 public meeting, representatives from the N.H. Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food and the N.H. Department of Resources and Economic Development, Division of Forests and Lands, will describe the emerald ash borer’s threat and the purpose and provisions of the quarantine.

Concerned citizens, homeowners who have ash trees on their properties, community leaders, members of the forestry and “green” industries, and those concerned about the health of New Hampshire’s trees and forests are encouraged to attend.

Fred Borman, UNH Cooperative Extension’s Rockingham County forester advises homeowners and woodlot owners to be aware of woodpecker activity around ash trees. “Woodpeckers will strip away the outer bark, leaving the trunk with a ‘blonded’ appearance. EAB can be a fast-spreading insect. The best we can do is locate infested trees, treat or remove them, and try to slow down the spread of this invasive insect.”