

From: pestalert@massnrc.org

As you may have read in the news last month, state officials from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) recently confirmed the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the city of Worcester, MA. EAB is a small, metallic green beetle, native to Asia, which feeds on ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) and white fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*). This pest can kill a tree quickly, within just 3 to 5 years, because it bores directly under the bark and disrupts the tree's conductive system. It has now spread throughout 25 states, killing millions of ash trees and causing billions of dollars in treatment, removal and replacement costs.

In late November, four infested trees were found by crews in Worcester that were checking trees for another invasive pest, the Asian Longhorned Beetle. With EAB already in Berkshire and Essex Counties, the arrival of this pest in the central part of Massachusetts is not unexpected. But while the confirmation of EAB in Worcester is not cause for alarm, it is an invasive pest and it does require communities to alter the way they are managing forests and street trees in order to deal with the pending loss of ash.

Although eradication of EAB is not feasible, slowing its spread allows communities to prepare in advance and make the best decisions about how to manage ash trees before they are impacted. To prevent the inadvertent spread of forest pests like EAB, avoid moving untreated firewood long distances. Instead, find local and trusted firewood suppliers, or purchase firewood that is certified as treated.

With this new find in Worcester, MA, it is important to recognize that although the statewide emerald ash borer quarantine allows ash and firewood to be moved throughout the state, ash remains a host for Asian Longhorned Beetle. Therefore no ash products or firewood can be moved from within the 110 square mile regulated area encompassing Worcester, Boylston, West Boylston, Shrewsbury, and parts of Holden and Auburn.

This January 6th, the Forest Pest Task Force will be holding an EAB Preparedness Forum for municipalities, land trusts, and tree wardens to learn more about what they should be doing to prepare for the arrival of EAB. This invitation-only event has limited open spots remaining. To inquire, please contact Felicia Bakaj at Felicia.Bakaj@state.ma.us