



News Release

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EMERALD ASH BORER SPREADING IN GEORGIA

The invasive insect responsible for the death or decline of hundreds of millions of ash trees in 27 states is on the move in Georgia. First found in Georgia in July 2013 in DeKalb and Fulton Counties, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) can now be found in 23 counties. Trapping results for 2016 indicate that Emerald Ash Borer is present in four additional counties: Bartow, Gilmer, Rabun and Union.

In partnership with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Forestry Commission has been following federal guidelines and restricting the movement of ash materials out of the quarantine area since 2013. The GFC has been working closely with forest landowners, loggers, mills, firewood producers, nurseries, municipalities, and others during the last three years to ensure that commerce can still occur while safeguards are in place to prevent ash borer movement.

According to Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, Emerald Ash Borers “are hitch-hikers.” Black said their larvae live underneath the bark of ash firewood, hidden from view. People unknowingly give the pest a ride when they move Emerald Ash Borer infested firewood between counties or from home to campsite. “Everyone can help by spreading the message, ‘Don’t move firewood,’” he said.

Georgia Forestry Commission Director Robert Farris explained that while only one percent of Georgia’s forested acres contain ash trees, the potential for destruction is significant. Some three million ash trees are in urban environments and another two million acres are in rural settings. Losses generated to the forest industry and the public could reach \$1 billion.

With the addition of four new counties this year, a regional level quarantine has been proposed. A map of the proposed quarantine area can be found on the following website:

<http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/eab/index.cfm>. The Georgia Forestry Commission and Georgia Department of Agriculture are taking comments on these proposed changes to the quarantine area for a 30 day comment period. Written comments will be accepted until September 30, 2016 at 4:30 pm EST. New regulations will go into effect in October 2016. Comments



can be submitted on-line at the website listed above or via U.S. mail (or other carrier), but must reach the GFC by the above date and time to be considered. Mailing/physical address is:

Attn: Robert Farris, Director
Georgia Forestry Commission
5645 Riggins Mill Road
Dry Branch, GA 31020

The Emerald Ash Borer is a small, green metallic beetle first detected in North America in 2002 in southeastern Michigan. The EAB attacks only ash trees, and all ash species – including green, white, black and blue – are at risk. Signs of Emerald Ash Borer infestation include a general decline in the appearance of the tree, thinning of upper branches and twigs, loss of leaves, and serpentine tunnels produced by EAB larvae under the bark. Woodpeckers may often be observed removing the bark of infested trees to access the larvae.

For more information, including identification tips for landowners who suspect the presence of EAB or other invasive species on their property, visit www.gainvasives.org/eab.

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