

MDC confirms Emerald Ash Borer in six new MO Counties

Foresters with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) have confirmed the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in six new counties across Missouri. New detections have been confirmed in Caldwell, Gasconade, Harrison, Hickory, Webster, and Wright counties. Since EAB was first detected in Missouri in July 2008, the exotic, tree-killing pest has spread to a total of 59 Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis.

EAB is a small, metallic green beetle native to Asia that attacks all species of ash trees, including the commonly planted green ash and white ash. At approximately a half-inch long, the green adult beetle feeds on leaves and does very little damage to trees. However, in its larval stage, the insect kills ash trees by feeding on the water- and nutrient-conducting tissues just under the bark.

MDC Forest Entomologist Robbie Doerhoff suspects that EAB is present in several other counties besides those on the most recent map of confirmations.

“After EAB arrives in a new location, it can take at least five years for the population to build to the point where we can detect it using specialized insect traps,” said Doerhoff. “We really rely on public reports to help us find new EAB locations, particularly in the winter months.”

You can help MDC track the spread of this invasive pest by keeping an eye out for bark blanding on ash trees. Bark blanding is caused by woodpeckers removing a tree’s outer bark while searching for insect larvae. On ash trees, this feeding activity reveals a white inner bark that is highly noticeable.

“Ash trees with bark blanding may not have EAB, but it is certainly worth reporting these trees for a closer look by MDC foresters,” added Doerhoff.

MDC encourages Missourians to report possible EAB 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 MDC’s Forest Pest Hotline at 866-716-9974. You can help slow the spread of EAB and other invasive forest pests by using locally harvested firewood. Buy firewood near where you plan to burn it!