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Johnson County, Indiana

Don't transport firewood to keep borer in check

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Throughout the summer I received numerous calls from concerned homeowners about their ash trees and the emerald ash borer.

The closest counties with emerald ash borer infestations are Brown and Marion. Johnson County has had no identified presence of emerald ash borer to date.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have been monitoring emerald ash borer movement and/or presence throughout Indiana using traps.

These are large purple panel box traps, which attract and capture the emerald ash borers as they move. They also inspect known regions with large numbers of ash trees.

Adult emerald ash borer beetles are bright metallic green. Mature beetles are one-third-inch long and a 16th of an inch wide with rounded abdomens and flat backs. They are present from mid-May through late July.

Their unusual shape accounts for the distinctive D-shaped exit holes through which they emerge from trees beginning in late April throughout the summer. Adults live about 20 days, feeding lightly on ash leaves.

Adult females mate and lay eggs soon after they appear in late May. Adult emergence continues through mid-summer, so eggs are deposited on or in the bark through late July.

Eggs are a light yellow color, oval shaped, and about .04 inch long. Each female lays about 75 eggs during her lifetime. Eggs hatch in seven to 10 days into worm-like larvae.

The larvae are creamy white with flattened, segmented bodies up to one inch long. After hatching, larvae bore through bark to feed on ash trees'

vascular tissue, which transports water and nutrients throughout the tree.

Growing larvae zigzag through this delicate tree tissue as they feed, forming S-shaped tunnels that are flat and wide. These tunnels are packed with frass (excrement).

When warmer weather arrives (usually in April), larvae enter the pupal stage. During this stage they will transform from larvae into sexually mature adults.

Controlling or preventing emerald ash borer from inhabiting or damaging your ash trees can become an expensive and continual process.

Ash trees in poor condition would not be good candidates for preventive insecticide applications. It is always good idea to consult a certified arborist before making any decisions about protecting your ash trees.

Imidacloprid or cyfluthrin are a couple of active ingredients in insecticides that would provide effective for emerald ash borer control. A tree and shrub drench containing imidacloprid can be mixed with water and soil-applied as a drench by homeowners or applied by professionals using a high-pressure soil injection system.

When applied as a soil drench, it takes about four to eight weeks for the tree to absorb the insecticide and distribute it throughout the leaves. Mid-April to mid-May is the best time to apply this insecticide, which can be found at almost any lawn and garden store.

Cyfluthrin affects the adult emerald ash borer, thus it is applied as a spray to tree trunks and foliage when emerald ash borer starts flying in May. The spray should be repeated four weeks later. Time the first of the two sprays when black locust trees are in bloom in May.

It also is important to not transport ash wood from quarantined counties to non-quarantined counties. This helps prevent long-distance movement of ash borer larvae from infected areas. If you cut, sell or burn firewood, please keep this in mind.

If you are going camping, it is best to buy your firewood locally rather than moving firewood.

Additional information on the emerald ash borer is available at www.entm.purdue.edu/eab.

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