



NEWS

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NEW EMERALD ASH BORER INFESTATION CONFIRMED

Tree-killing beetle discovered at state park in Winnebago County

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – A destructive pest that feasts on ash trees has been confirmed in Winnebago County. The emerald ash borer (EAB) was discovered at Rock Cut State Park in Loves Park, the Illinois Department of Agriculture announced today.

IDOA staff collected a specimen and submitted it to the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which then confirmed the specimen as EAB.

“Winnebago County already was under quarantine when this discovery happened,” Agriculture Director Tom Jennings said. “So, although this is the first time the beetle has been detected there, no immediate adjustment to the department’s EAB quarantine boundaries is necessary.”

The emerald ash borer is a small, metallic-green beetle native to Asia. Its larvae burrow into the bark of ash trees, causing the trees to starve and eventually die. While the beetle does not pose any direct risk to public health, it does threaten the tree population. Since the emerald ash borer was first confirmed in the Midwest in the summer of 2002, it has killed more than 25 million ash trees.

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EAB/2222

All or parts of 24 counties in the northern and central parts of Illinois are currently under quarantine to prevent the accidental spread of the beetle. The quarantine prohibits the intrastate movement of potentially-contaminated wood products, including ash trees, limbs and branches and all types of firewood.

In response to the confirmation in Winnebago County, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is asking visitors to help prevent the spread of EAB.

“While we may never know exactly where this bug came from it does serve as a friendly reminder that if you plan to visit a state park, recreation area or other IDNR-managed site, please do not bring firewood from any area where an EAB quarantine has been imposed. We encourage visitors to purchase firewood at the site, but if you decide to bring your own firewood, only bring what you intend to use,” IDNR Director Marc Miller said.

Winnebago is the fourteenth Illinois county with a confirmed EAB infestation. Previous detections were made in Boone, Bureau, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Iroquois, Kane, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, McHenry, McLean and Will counties.

The emerald ash borer is difficult to detect, especially in newly-infested trees. Citizens should watch for metallic-green beetles about half the diameter of a penny on or near ash trees that are showing signs of disease or stress. Other signs of infestation in ash trees include D-shaped holes in the bark of the trunk or branches and shoots growing from its base.

Anyone who suspects a tree has been infested is urged to contact either their county Extension office or village forester. For more information, visit www.IllinoisEAB.com on the internet.

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