

European House Borer Response



Exotic pest fact sheet



Adult European House Borer
– Picture not to scale

What is it?

European House Borer (EHB), *Hylotrupes bajulus*, is a destructive insect pest of seasoned (dry) softwood timber, including pine, fir and spruce (*Pinus*, *Abies*, *Picea* and *Pseudotsuga*).

EHB is found in Europe, the Middle East (Turkey), North Africa, South Africa, South America, the United States, China and Asia Minor. The pest probably came into Western Australia in imported pine timber as larvae.

As of April 2011, EHB has been found at 181 Western Australian sites across 60 Perth suburbs, and in one Albany location, where infested timber had been transported from the Perth Hills area. Seventy per cent of these infested sites have been cleared of all EHB host material.

Long term EHB infestation has the potential to cause significant structural damage to homes built with untreated pinewood. The risk to structural timber has already been confirmed through the discovery of EHB in a Perth home, the likely cause of infestation from nearby infested pine trees.

What to look for

EHB is usually found in dead pinewood or the deadwood inclusions of live pine trees. This has included dried out branch stubs, damaged branches and trunks, dead trees and logs. There have also been some finds in untreated structural pine timber and untreated pine furniture.

EHB spread is slow. Larvae can remain in host timber for 2-12 years (2-5 years in Western Australia) before emerging as adult beetles. An adult EHB beetle will travel only a minimal distance if its food source has not yet been exhausted, which can take more than 10 years.

The most visible evidence to indicate infestation of structural timber or a timber article is:

- Adult beetles which are brownish-black to black and have a slightly flattened appearance. The beetle's wings are usually black and may have distinctive white patches. The top surface of the first body segment behind the head has two raised black knobs, like eyes. Adults are about 8-25mm in length with antennae about half as long as the body.
- Characteristic oval-shaped holes, about 5-10mm in length and running in line with the grain of the timber, from which the adult beetle has emerged.
- Frass, a mixture of powdery wood dust and pellets of excrement, can sometimes be found below infested timber where adult beetles have emerged.

- Long blister-like swellings under the thin layer of uneaten wood can sometimes be seen, caused by the tightly packed frass.

Other evidence to indicate EHB timber infestation include:

- EHB larvae within timber. Larvae are elongated and cylindrical with an enlarged and flattened head. The length varies up to 4cm.
- Tunnels (galleries) within the timber, which are formed by the boring larvae and are tightly packed with frass. Galleries rarely break through the surface of the timber and are seldom detected.
- A soft scraping sound, which is made by the larvae as they feed and may be audible from some distance. This can often be heard at night.
- Batches of up to 120 eggs which are laid in crevices or cracks in timber.



EHB exit hole.
– Picture not to scale (CD Pless and G Schweiger UT E&PP)



The European House Borer larva. It can often be heard chewing its way through timber.
– Picture not to scale

Is my suburb affected?

Suburbs affected by European House Borer are those located within Restricted Movement Zones (RMZ).

To view high resolution digital RMZ maps visit the EHB website www.ehb.wa.gov.au.

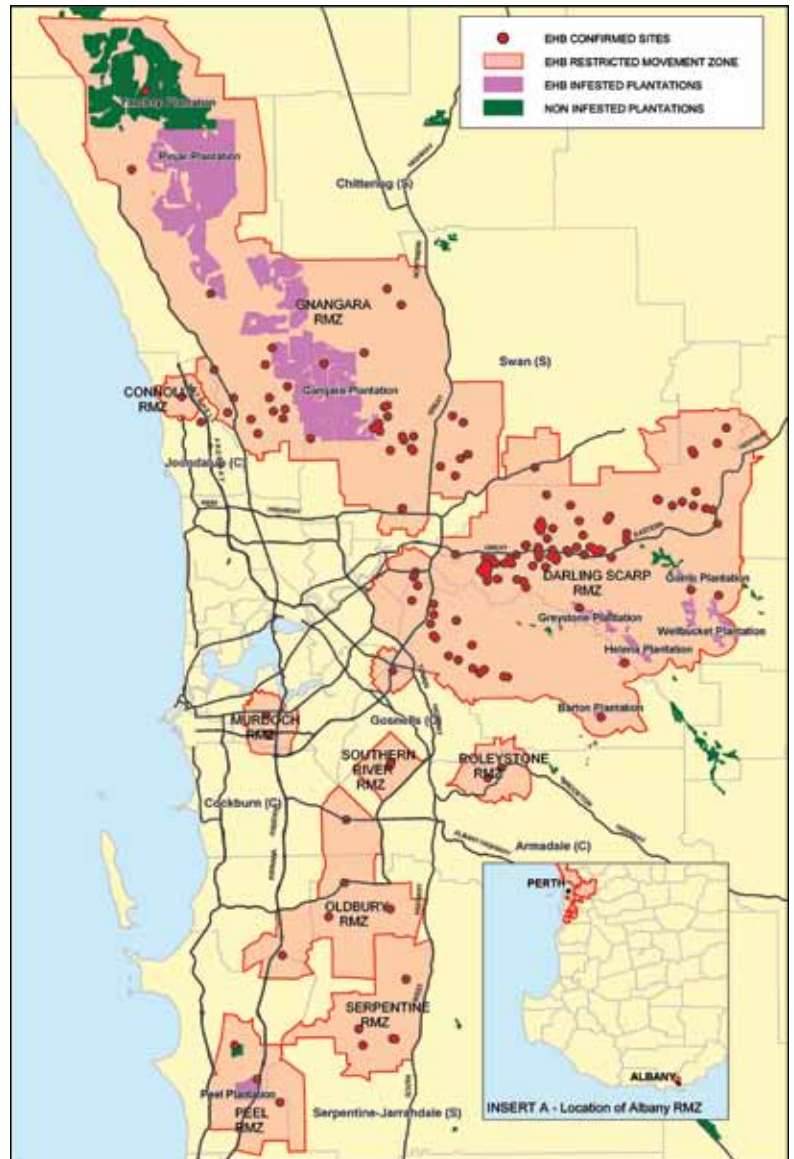
RMZs are areas surrounding sites of EHB infestation. The owner or occupier of properties located within a RMZ must comply with restrictions under the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (European House Borer) Regulations 2006*. These apply to the movement, storage, treatment and disposal of untreated pinewood located within a RMZ.

To view the regulations, visit the State Law Publisher website www.slp.wa.gov.au, penalties of up to \$2000 apply for regulation breaches.

What to do to minimise spread and infestation

- **Use treated pinewood** or other non-susceptible material when building in RMZ areas. Where pine is a primary building element it must be treated for hazard level H2 or higher (see Building Commission Advisory Notes 2009/002 and 2009/004). Local Government building licences also require use of non-susceptible materials when building in RMZ areas.
- Have homes built with untreated structural pinewood **regularly inspected** by an EHB accredited pest controller.
- Untreated pinewood **exposed** to a RMZ environment for 72 hours or more may require treatment or disposal in accordance with the regulations.
- **Movement** of untreated pinewood *into and out of* RMZ areas must be in accordance with the regulations.
- For **residents**, do not collect pine wood from local government verge side collections, waste bins and pine plantations.
- For **businesses**, contact the EHB Hotline 1800 084 881 for guidance on movement, storage, timber treatments and disposal of pinewood articles susceptible to EHB infestation.
- Secure any untreated **pinewood you want to keep** in a suitable pest resistant building, enclosure or material covering (as per regulations) to prevent exposure to EHB infestation.
- Dispose of untreated **pinewood waste material** through local government waste bins, approved waste collection services or at refuse facilities. Waste timber includes firewood, off-cuts, unwanted pinewood articles, disused furniture, and pine tree trunks and branches.
- Business located in RMZ areas must inform **sub-contractors and suppliers** of pine timber restrictions to avoid further EHB infestation and spread.
- Business **can assist** by isolating exposed pinewood articles for collection and treatment, and providing waste bins for disposal of unwanted timber.

EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER RESTRICTED MOVEMENT ZONES MAY 2011



Management

If EHB becomes established in Western Australia, homes built with untreated structural pine timbers, such as those in the newer suburbs of Perth, will be vulnerable to EHB infestation.

The EHB Response Program, introduced in 2004 by the Department of Agriculture and Food, has played a large role in reducing EHB populations within infested areas, especially in suburban/residential areas. Additionally, research into the EHB life cycle and behaviours has created a wealth of information upon which a number of control and containment strategies have been based.

As the EHB program is changing from eradication to containment, a greater focus on EHB self-management by stakeholders will be vital to minimise EHB spread. Individuals, business and government are urged to familiarise themselves with the many options available to prevent human assisted spread, and to avoid infestation.

How to correctly identify EHB infestations will be critical to reducing the threat against Western Australia homes. Accordingly, EHB training for Western Australian pest controllers has been revised to maximise the chances of future detections.

Additionally, extensive information on EHB descriptions and infestation signs has been placed on the EHB website.

To minimise the spread of EHB to other Australian states, interstate regulations are currently being drafted to restrict the movement of pinewood out of Western Australia.

For more information visit

www.ehb.wa.gov.au

Report any suspected EHB activity to the freecall hotline 1800 084 881