

Untreated pinewood waste management



European House Borer Fact Sheet

Background

European House Borer (EHB) was discovered in Perth in 2004. EHB is a destructive pest that has the potential to infest and bore through any piece of untreated seasoned (dry) pinewood. This includes:

- Structural untreated pine timbers
- Untreated pine furniture and products
- Dead parts of live pine trees

EHB larvae can live undetected in host timber from 2-12 years. Because of its long life cycle and slow spread, preventative action can be taken to reduce its spread throughout Western Australia, and avoid further infestation.

An important strategy in reducing spread is to encourage better management of untreated pinewood waste, such as off-cuts, firewood, and old pinewood such as disused pallets and packaging, and items from verge side collections.



Poor management of untreated pinewood waste (such as off-cuts pictured here) may be putting our homes at risk

Because of the covert nature of EHB, all untreated pinewood waste must be regarded as potentially infested. Waste materials must not be moved, and must be properly stored, treated or disposed of. Local governments and private contractors may require authorisation to move waste materials to waste and recycling facilities.

What can I do?



Improperly stored (left) or neglected (right) untreated pinewood waste will increase EHB spread and infestation

Public

Poor management of waste materials may spread EHB to areas previously not affected – thereby increasing risks for nearby residents. The following guidelines should be followed:

- **DO NOT LEAVE untreated pinewood waste materials exposed to the environment**
- **DO NOT USE untreated pinewood waste materials that have not been properly stored or treated**
- **DO NOT KEEP unwanted pinewood. Dispose of in local government waste bins, or at local government waste and recycling facilities**
- **DO NOT MOVE pinewood materials from verge side collections or plantations**

Local government

Local governments must ensure that facilities used as part of their domestic waste programs have approved disposal procedures, to prevent the survival of EHB in timber waste. Additionally, the movement of untreated pinewood waste to facilities located in non-affected EHB areas may require authorisation. Waste must be:

- **CHIPPED so the volume of pieces are less than 100cm³; or**
- **BURNED; or**
- **BURIED more than one metre below the surface of the ground; or**
- **STORED in a suitable building or enclosure, or wrapped in plastic or another authorised material**

Why is waste management important?

Untreated pinewood has been commonly used in the State for structural roof framing since 2000. Therefore, if potentially infested pinewood waste such as off-cuts, firewood or verge side collections is moved to a new location, there is a chance that beetles can emerge and infest nearby untreated pinewood, such as roof structures.



An added risk is the spread of EHB to previously non-infested areas, thereby increasing the threat of infestation to homes in that area.

Untreated pinewood exposed to the environment for longer than 72 hours, particularly in areas already affected by EHB, also risks infestation. Infested wood that continues to be exposed increases the chances of nearby untreated materials becoming infested.



While adult beetles usually re-infest the same piece of wood, they have been known to fly short distances, or can be transported long distances through human assisted movement. In both cases, beetles will always search for host material in which to lay eggs.



Store your pinewood waste properly (left), and do not collect and move untreated pinewood such as old pieces of timber or firewood (above)

EHB response

Following the discovery of EHB in 2004, the Department of Agriculture and Food commenced a response program to undertake surveillance and monitoring of the pest, determine infestations and implement an eradication program.

The program was a partnership with the Forest Products Commission, and in 2007 became nationally funded by all States and the Federal Government. The eradication program transitioned to a containment program in 2010.

Initial surveillance found that infestation was restricted to the dead parts of pine trees, in the greater Perth metropolitan area. Populations were located mainly in the hills, Gnangara and southern metropolitan regions, with one find in Albany.

The move to containment will mean greater risk of EHB spreading to other areas. Strategies such as responsible untreated pine waste management will play an important role in reducing EHB spread.



Blisters and emergence holes resulting from EHB infestation

What to look for

Adult EHB beetles create oval-shaped emergence holes in the timber, running in line with the grain of the wood. Dust and droppings may be seen on the floor below the timber where the adults have emerged.

EHB larvae tunnel through wood, packing tunnels or galleries with wood dust and droppings as they go. As they near the surface, narrow blisters along the grain of the wood may also be seen. Where there are exposed untreated pine beams or pine products, larvae may be heard chewing the timber.



The tunnels created by larvae, as pictured here, can not usually be seen from the surface of the wood – the damage remains hidden

While EHB has been found mainly in the dead parts of pine trees, and untreated pinewood materials, there has also been one discovery of EHB in the untreated structural roof timbers of a Perth home. The infestation was the result of EHB migrating from nearby infested pine trees.

For more information visit

www.ehb.wa.gov.au

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



Department of
Agriculture and Food

