

MEDIA RELEASE

25 OCTOBER 2004

FIRST PHASE OF EHB SURVEILLANCE COMPLETE

The first phase of a survey to determine the spread of an exotic wood borer has been completed.

Surveillance crews with the Forest Products Commission and Department of Agriculture have been checking dead pine trees throughout the greater Perth metropolitan area and the southwest, for signs of European House Borer (EHB).

European House Borer is a destructive pest of untreated pine. More than 1025 sites were examined for signs of the insect.

EHB coordinator Lisa Christy said there were no positive finds in regional areas, including the main softwood plantations in the southwest. She said EHB detections were limited to just 27 properties in about 10 outer Perth suburbs.

“The most tell tale sign of infestation is the presence of emergence holes in line with the grain of the wood,” said EHB Coordinator Lisa Christy.

“Suspect trees were cut down and wood split to look for borer larvae to confirm the infestation. This approach made it possible to carry out extensive surveillance very rapidly, and to give an initial assessment of the extent of the infestation,” said Ms Christy.

“The plan is to repeat the ‘dead tree’ surveillance annually to detect new emergence holes from infestations that may currently be hidden.”

Infested trees will be removed and destroyed over the coming months.

In its juvenile borer state, EHB can remain undetected for between two and 10 years. As an adult it emerges from the timber during spring and into summer to mate and repeat the cycle.

People living in suburbs where EHB has been found in timber are being asked to be particularly watchful for the adult beetle as WA enters flight season.

Adult beetles are dark brown to black and appear slightly flattened. Beetle wings are usually black but may have distinctive white patches. Behind the head there are two raised, black, shiny knobs, which are like eyes. Adults are about 8-25mm long with antennae about half that length.

Ms Christy said the second phase of the surveillance would include surveillance in private pine plantations, followed by the placement of traps to catch adult beetles.

“Sex pheromones and food lure chemicals will be used to attract beetles to the traps. The lures are currently being formulated in the USA, with delivery expected by the end of November.

“The third phase will see seasoned pine trap poles placed on a grid pattern through infested areas.
...More/

EHB
PROGRAM

European House Borer



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“The trap poles will attract beetles away from structural pine, and will also show where beetles are active and laying eggs.”

Results from the trap poles will not be available until the end of winter 2006.

More information is available online at www.ehb.wa.gov.au or from the free call Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Anyone who sees EHB beetle or signs of European House Borer should call the Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

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Contact the freecall hotline 1800 084 881 for further information

