

## European House Borer takes flight



EHB Program staff monitoring EHB activity

The State Government is calling on Perth residents and businesses to stop the flight of European House Borer (EHB) this summer.

One of the world's most destructive pests of untreated seasoned pine, EHB was first detected in Western Australia in early 2004 and has been identified in two main clusters, a few isolated sites and some pine plantations in greater metropolitan Perth.

It has so far been found in dead and unhealthy pine trees and logs, and a small number of untreated pine furniture pieces. To date EHB has not been detected in structural timber, where EHB has been known to cause serious damage to buildings in other countries. EHB Program Director Lisa Christy said community support was vital in stopping the spread of EHB, especially during its September to March flight season. "Untreated pine is at most risk when the adult beetles fly in search of untreated pine in which to lay their eggs", she said.

"The less untreated pine we leave laying about for EHB, the better chance we have of eradicating it."

Ms Christy said, "The public can assist by looking for signs of EHB - mainly exit holes (5-10mm, oval in shape, running with the grain) in any pine trees and untreated pine materials that have been stored outside".

People are also encouraged to take steps to protect any untreated pine from EHB beetles over the summer months by storing it inside, in a shed or wrapping the item at risk in plastic. Any untreated pine waste should be disposed of via the local government waste management system.

Ms Christy commented that, "EHB is a potential problem for the future but, given it has been detected relatively early, we have the opportunity to try and solve a future problem today".

A Freecall Hotline 1800 084 881 has been set up for the public to report any suspected EHB activity and [www.ehb.wa.gov.au](http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au) provides updated information on the EHB Program.



Dead pine trees and dead branches in living pine trees are at risk of EHB infestation

# What is EHB?

The adult EHB Beetle is brownish-black in colour, ranges from 8-25mm in length, with antennae about half as long as the body.

EHB larvae live within timber for anything from 2 to 12 years, are up to 40mm in length and are cream in colour.

The adult beetle emerges from infested untreated pine between September and March to lay its eggs in cracks, holes and joints in dead pine trees, dead branches of living trees and untreated pine timber.

The pest is able to live in a wide variety of climatic conditions, however it prefers temperate habitats.



Adult European House Borer.  
- Picture not to scale (Dept of Agriculture Western Australia)



Life size male (smaller) and female (larger) pinned samples of EHB Beetle

- Picture to scale



Close up of EHB beetle moving across untreated pine

## What to look for

The most visible evidence to indicate that untreated pine is affected by EHB is the presence of:

- Characteristic oval shaped exit holes (5-10mm long) in any pine trees and untreated pine materials that have been stored outside
- Frass - a mixture of fine powdery particles of wood dust and excrement
- Soft scraping sounds which may be heard as EHB eats through the timber
- Galleries (tunnels) and larvae may be evident in untreated pine timber that has been planed, sawn, or split

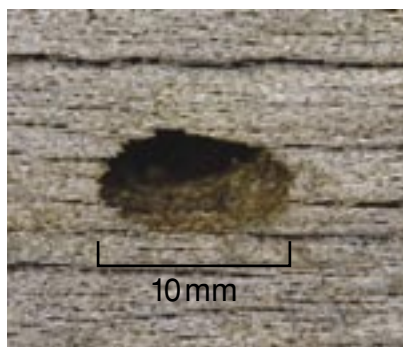
EHB has only been detected in seasoned (dry) untreated pine in Western Australia.



Damage caused by the European House Borer



Off-cut of timber exhibiting oval-shaped exit holes caused by emerging adult beetles.



Close-up of adult beetle exit hole.  
- Picture not to scale (CD Pless and G Schweiger UT E&PP)



Exposed larvae boring through timber.  
- Picture not to scale (Clemson University USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series)

**WANT MORE INFORMATION?** If you detect signs of EHB activity on your property or would like more information, please contact your local pest control professional.

# How to protect your property and help contain EHB

## THINGS TO DO:

- Remove and destroy dead limbs from pine trees
- Remove any dead pine trees (chip or dispose of at local tip or waste transfer station)
- Use up any stored pine firewood before summer
- Dispose of all untreated waste pine material including left over pine firewood at the local tip
- Separate untreated waste pine materials for verge side collection
- Store any wanted untreated pine materials inside, within a shed or wrapped in plastic - this will prevent EHB beetles landing and laying eggs
- Follow the Department of Housing and Works' building notes when building or renovating in affected areas and use treated pine or other non-susceptible materials as a precautionary measure against EHB and other timber pests

- Check all untreated pine furniture for signs of EHB
- Report any signs of EHB activity to the Freecall Hotline 1800 084 881

## THINGS NOT TO DO:

- Do not collect any untreated pine materials from verge side collections or waste disposal sites including logs, milled timber, pallets or furniture that may be constructed of untreated pine
- Do not collect and store pine logs/timber for future firewood supplies

It is important that untreated pine in all forms is not moved from its origin - do not take untreated pine home to store as firewood or for any other use as you may unknowingly be transporting EHB to your property and spreading this pest to new areas.

## Industry support needed!

Businesses using, selling or transporting untreated pine are also being urged to watch out for signs of EHB this summer.

It is essential to restrict the movement of untreated waste pine, such as pine logs and offcuts, out of areas where EHB has been detected and to store any untreated pine materials, such as pallets, dunnage and sawn pine timber in a way that will reduce the risk of EHB adult beetles landing to lay eggs.

EHB Program Director Lisa Christy said "storage, disposal and movement of untreated pine, including waste, needs to be managed to prevent the spread of EHB.

"If you suspect signs of EHB it is important to report it immediately and not to move the material", she said.

"An EHB Officer will then inspect the material and if EHB is found, the government will work with the owner to treat or destroy the wood."

The EHB Program is working with the Tree Guild of WA, Furnishing Industry Association of Australia (WA), Australian Environmental Pest Management Association, Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Association

and the Forest Industries Federation of WA to develop processes to reduce the risk of EHB spread while minimising the impact these will have on business.

"Industry support is essential in preventing the spread of this potentially destructive pest", said Ms Christy.

If you suspect the presence of EHB in materials at your property or at a customer's property, please contact the Freecall Hotline on 1800 084 881.



Businesses are being urged to protect any untreated pine items from EHB including pallets

# Rapid response to EHB



EHB staff preparing a cross section of dead pine for sampling

Since the first detection of European House Borer (EHB) last year, rapid action has been taken by the State Government to determine the extent of the pest and how to counteract it.

There has been extensive surveillance from Geraldton to Esperance, and specialised field officers have inspected dead pine on private property and checked over 100,000 hectares of pine plantations statewide.

Doorknocking over 40,000 residents in areas where EHB has been detected has identified untreated pine materials at high risk of EHB infestation. Over 750 dead or at risk pine trees have been removed in affected areas as a strategy to contain EHB through reducing what appears to be its preferred habitat.

EHB Program Operations Manager Jason Lette said, "People have been very supportive of the EHB Program. Most are happy for us to ask questions about any untreated pine on their property and to work with them

on removing any high-risk materials".

Trap poles have been installed as a way of monitoring if EHB is still active in the area once high-risk materials have been removed.

Teams of EHB Technical Field Officers have travelled the streets of Perth looking for exit holes in any unhealthy or dead pine trees.

An EHB breeding colony, one of only a few in the world, has been established to allow the Department of Agriculture to conduct much needed research into EHB activity in our environment. This research will provide the government with important information to ensure appropriate responses can be developed to tackle EHB.

The State Government is looking at containment strategies to limit the spread of EHB by restricting the movement of untreated pine and hopefully eradicating EHB from Western Australia.



Report any suspected EHB activity to the

Department of Agriculture - Freecall Hotline

# 1800 084 881

For more information visit [www.ehb.wa.gov.au](http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au)