



MEDIA RELEASE

European House Borer Flight Season Begins; Residents Urged to Store Untreated Pine

Perth, 3 September 2008 – European House Borer (EHB) flight season is once again underway, and residents in affected areas are being urged to store away untreated pine and report any suspected signs of the quarantine pest.

From September to March, EHB larvae pupate and turn into adult beetles. After mating, female beetles fly to find seasoned, untreated pine wood or timber to lay eggs into. The resultant larvae can cause serious damage by tunnelling through the wood.

The Department of Agriculture and Food's EHB Response has been running a campaign to increase public awareness of the destructive pest, urging the public to "listen, look, call" if there are any signs of EHB.

"The most important thing we're asking residents in affected areas to do is store away any untreated pinewood, and destroy or dispose of any waste pine now that flight season is here," said EHB Response Director John van Schagen.

"We're also asking people to listen for unusual scraping sounds made by the borer as it feeds in pine timber, to look for beetles and their exit holes and to call the EHB hotline to report any suspected EHB activity."

Storing untreated pine properly is key to containing the pest. Placing untreated pine items such as sawn timber, pallets or furniture inside a fully-enclosed shed or securely wrapping items in plastic until the end of summer helps reduce the risk of spreading EHB during flight season.

While untreated pine can be sealed or stored away safely, it is recommended that waste pine be destroyed. This can be done by chipping it into pieces smaller than 100cm³ (about one third the size of a soft drink can), burning it during permitted burning times or disposing of it through the council waste disposal system.

EHB was first identified in Perth in January 2004. Since then, EHB Response has inspected over 60,000 Perth properties and 300,000 hectares of pine plantations for the pest. There are 132 infested sites in total, centred around two main clusters – the Mundaring Hills and the Gnangara/Ellenbrook area, including nine pine plantations. Plantation removal in affected areas adjacent to housing is planned.

More information about European House Borer is available online at www.ehb.wa.gov.au or by calling the Freecall Hotline at **1800 084 881**.

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Picture attachment: Residents are urged to store pine away and report signs of European House Borer, including larvae, beetles or exit holes.