



June 29, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMERALD ASH BORER CONFIRMED IN KEARNEY

LINCOLN—The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), confirmed emerald ash borer (EAB) in a tree in Kearney. Kearney Park and Recreation staff discovered the tree on a street terrace and reported it to NDA. This is the first detection of EAB in Buffalo County, and the first find outside of eastern Nebraska. EAB, an invasive beetle that attacks and kills ash trees, was first found in Omaha in 2016.

“As more people recognize the signs and symptoms of EAB in ash trees and as EAB continues to move, we can expect to find additional infestations in Nebraska,” said NDA Director Steve Wellman. “By monitoring for EAB, creating quarantine orders and teaching home owners and communities how to help slow the spread of this destructive pest, NDA and the Nebraska EAB Work Group have given people more time to prepare for the arrival of EAB and develop plans for disposing of and managing infested trees.”

EAB is a small, metallic-green beetle that is about ½ inch long. The larvae of this wood-boring insect tunnel under the bark of ash trees, disrupting the flow of water and nutrients, ultimately causing the tree to die. EAB-infested ash trees will exhibit thinning or dying branches in the top of the tree, S-shaped larval galleries under bark, D-shaped exit holes and suckers (along the trunk and main branches).

Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Lancaster, Otoe, Sarpy, Saunders and Washington counties remain under a quarantine, first issued in 2016 and updated in 2018, which includes prohibiting ash nursery stock from leaving the quarantine area and regulating the movement of hardwood firewood and mulch, ash timber products and green waste material out of quarantined areas. Quarantines are put in place to reduce the human-assisted spread of EAB into non-infested areas. NDA and USDA staff work with the public and impacted industries to ensure compliance of quarantines. NDA will make any updates to the state EAB quarantine this fall, after adult flight is over and trapping has been completed.

The Nebraska EAB Working Group, which includes NDA, the USDA, Nebraska Game and Parks and the Nebraska Forest Services, offers the following suggestions to help prevent the human-assisted spread of the insect:

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- Use locally-sourced firewood, burning it in the same county where you purchased it, as EAB can easily be moved in firewood.
- Consider treating healthy, high-value ash trees located within a 15-mile radius of a known infestation. Treatment will need to be continually reapplied and will only prolong the tree's life, not save it. Trees that are experiencing declining health should be considered for removal.
- If you are in a non-infested county and think you have located an EAB infestation, please report it to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at (402) 471-2351, the Nebraska Forest Service at (402) 472-2944 or your local USDA office at (402) 434-2345.

Additional information on EAB, including quarantine information, can be found on NDA's website at: nda.nebraska.gov/plant/entomology/eab/. Additional information on EAB and Nebraska-specific recommendations for homeowners and municipalities can be found on the Nebraska Forest Services' website at <https://nfs.unl.edu/nebraska-eab>.

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