

NEWS RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

MDA and partner organizations will conduct media availability at 3:30 p.m. today to discuss this finding. The availability will be held at Hampden Park in St. Paul, at the corner of Bayless and Raymond avenues.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, May 14, 2009

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Minnesota officials find emerald ash borer infestation in St. Paul neighborhood

Plans underway to quarantine firewood and certain ash material for Ramsey and Hennepin counties

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) today announced the discovery of an emerald ash borer infestation (EAB) in St. Paul just northeast of the intersection of Interstate 94 and Highway 280. This is the first detection of the destructive tree pest in Minnesota.

The infestation was initially reported to MDA by Rainbow Tree Care Company on Wednesday. After receiving the report and conducting an initial inspection, MDA submitted larvae from the infested trees to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for confirmation as EAB. USDA made that preliminary confirmation this morning.

In response to this finding, MDA plans to issue a quarantine prohibiting the movement of firewood, ash nursery stock, ash timber or any other article that could spread EAB in Ramsey and Hennepin counties. This quarantine is expected to be followed by a federal quarantine within days. MDA staff will now conduct a thorough survey of trees in the surrounding area to assess the extent of the infestation. Information from this survey will help determine the response strategy implemented by state and local officials. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are working closely with MDA in the response.

EAB is an invasive beetle that attacks and kills ash trees. Its larvae kill ash trees by tunneling into the wood and feeding on the tree's nutrients. Since its accidental introduction into North America, EAB has killed millions of ash trees in 10 eastern states. With an estimated 900 million ash trees, Minnesota is a prime target for EAB. Earlier this year, MDA issued a quarantine for Houston County in response to an EAB infestation across the border in Wisconsin.

The metallic-green adult beetles are a half inch long, and are active from May to September. Signs of EAB infestation include one-eighth inch, D-shaped exit holes in ash tree bark and serpentine tunnels packed with sawdust under the bark. While EAB spreads slowly on its own, it can hitch a ride to new areas when people transport firewood or other wood products infested with the larvae. Officials urge Minnesotans to take steps to keep EAB from spreading:

- **Don't transport firewood, even within Minnesota.** Don't bring firewood along on a camping trip. Buy the wood you need locally from an approved vendor. Don't bring extra wood home with you.
- **Don't buy or move firewood from outside your area.** If someone comes to your door selling firewood, ask them about the source of the wood.
- **Watch for signs of infestation in your ash trees.** If you suspect your ash tree could be infested by EAB, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/invasives/eab and use the "Do I Have Emerald Ash Borer?" checklist.

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This release is available on the MDA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us>

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