



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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Emerald Ash Borer Found in Prospect and Naugatuck, Connecticut

New Haven, CT – The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) today announced that the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) was detected in Prospect, CT on July 16, 2012 by staff members at CAES. The identification has been confirmed by federal regulatory officials in the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA APHIS-PPQ). This is the first record of this pest in Connecticut, which is added to 15 other states where infestations have been detected. A new probable site of infestation is located in the Naugatuck State Forest. The beetle identification is unconfirmed. The emerald ash borer is responsible for the death and decline of tens of millions of ash trees from the mid-west to New York State and south to Tennessee. Ash makes up about 4% to 15% of Connecticut's forests and is a common urban tree.

“The detection of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in Prospect and probably in Naugatuck reaffirms that statewide surveys for this pest were necessary,” said Louis A. Magnarelli, director of CAES. “We expected to find the beetle in areas of Connecticut across from infestations in Dutchess County, New York; however, the EAB has great flight potential and can travel in infested wood moved by people. This pest attacks all species of ash trees. Our immediate goals are to determine how extensive the Connecticut infestation is, notify residents in the Prospect and Naugatuck area, and implement strategies to slow the spread of the insect.”

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The insect specimens were recovered in Prospect from a ground-nesting, native wasp (*Cerceris fumipennis*), which hunts beetles in the family *Buprestidae*, including the emerald ash borer. The developing wasp larvae feed on the beetles provided by the adult wasp. The wasp provides a highly efficient and effective “bio-surveillance” survey tool and does not sting people or pets. This work was supported by the US Forest Service. In addition, 541 purple prism detection traps, containing a special chemical lure, have been set across the state in all eight counties by The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System via an agreement with the USDA APHIS PPQ. Three additional EAB have been captured in a trap located in Prospect, while other beetles were captured in a trap in Naugatuck.

“This is a disturbing discovery and one that has the potential for great environmental harm in the state,” said DEEP Commissioner Daniel C. Esty. “Connecticut has more than 22 million ash trees. The presence of EAB here could have a devastating effect on the beauty of our forests, state and local parks and neighborhoods, as well as the state’s wood product industries. Now that EAB has been detected here, it is more important than ever to limit its spread. It is imperative that residents and visitors throughout the state not move firewood. The movement of firewood that contains the presence of EAB is the quickest way to rapidly spread the insect. We will continue to work closely with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and other state and local agencies to do everything in our power to minimize the presence of EAB in Connecticut.”

The EAB is a small and destructive beetle, metallic green in color, and approximately 1/2 inch long and 1/8 inch wide. Adults emerge from the bark of infested trees leaving a small “D”-shaped exit hole roughly 1/8 inch in diameter. This insect is native to Asia and was first discovered in the Detroit, MI and Windsor, Ontario regions of North America in 2002. It has since spread through the movement of firewood, solid-wood packing materials, infested ash trees, and by natural flight dispersal.

It is unknown how the EAB entered Prospect or Naugatuck. Movement of infested firewood is a high risk activity that can spread the beetle over long distances. Prior to the pest’s discovery in Prospect, the closest known infestation to Connecticut is in eastern New York near the Hudson River.

The emerald ash borer is a regulated plant pest under federal (7 CFR 301.53) and state (CT Gen. Statute Sec. 22-84-5d, e, and f) regulations. For more information about the EAB, please visit the following website: www.emeraldashborer.info.

There will be a press conference at 1:15 PM at the Prospect Town Hall, 36 Center Street. Representatives of CAES will be attending the press conference. Materials will be on display. Officials of USDA APHIS-PPQ, DEEP, and the CT Department of Agriculture are expected to be present as well.

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