EAB: WINTER MANAGEMENT THROUGH SANITATION

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The emerald ash borer (EAB) has become the major issue facing our industry in Southeast Michigan. Whether we can save the ash trees has become a central theme to our daily activities, which have sometimes placed other responsibilities on the back burner. Since the discovery of the EAB, the information and our knowledge on this insect has progressed virtually every single day in this rapidly unfolding saga. Research from various agencies is currently being analyzed and will be made available.

When considering some of the treatment for the coming year we may think there is little we can do until spring. But, there is actually extensive work to be done this winter. During the winter months the EAB is in a very vulnerable state. It can neither fly nor crawl from its location within ash trees. One very important procedure that can be done throughout the winter is SANITATION. Sanitation is a key EAB cultural management procedure which is essential if we are to be effective in addressing the EAB crisis in Michigan. Sanitation has several important benefits; reduces the population of EAB, helping to prevent explosions of the insect population, and reduces the food substrate and habitat for the EAB.

SANITATION:

Sanitation, in the case of the EAB, involves removal of ash trees. Specifically, ash trees should be removed if they meet one of the following criteria:

1) Trees which are too advanced in decline to be saved. In adjusting my "stages of decline" based on preliminary research data, it is likely that trees showing any more than 10-20% decline will be very difficult to save.

2) Trees which are infested with EAB (i.e. reviewed in Winter Study case) and for which there are no plans for implementation of other management techniques. These infested trees serve as "brood trees" or "Typhoid Marys", increasing insect populations to threaten other trees.

3) Trees on the periphery of the intense infestations or epicenter can be targeted for removal if they are not desired and if we intend to reduce the populations of the insect in our suppression program.

It has been estimated that EAB populations are increasing 10X every year; scientific data from Asia disclosed that EAB adult females may lay as many as 80 eggs each per season, so the potential increase is probably much greater than 10X population increase per year. Sanitation is far more effective at reducing EAB populations during the winter months compared to waiting until the following summer or fall. The rapid increase in populations of the EAB along with the large number of planted and natural ash trees represents in 'incendiary' potential thoroughly realized in some areas of EAB infestation. Sanitation will be a primary tool in the over all management scheme just as it was and still is very important in Dutch Elm Disease management. Remember, because adult EAB will still emerge from wood cut the previous fall and winter, the wood needs to be chipped or burned, or buried, etc. to actually impact the EAB populations.

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WOOD DISPOSAL:

One of the primary concerns with Sanitation (ash trees removal) is the disposal of the wood. It is believed that chipping to less than one inch pieces will destroy the vast majority of the insects in the wood, especially if they are still in the larval state. Larvae which survive this highly destructive treatment will probably not be able to withstand exposure to the "harsh environment". The chipped wood can readily be used for landscaping needs provided it stays in the quarantined area. Wood which is chipped near or during the adult emergence period (May through July or August) will probably allow some adult survival; hence, it would be best to use this wood mulch well within the quarantined area and not out near the boundary of a technically "quarantined county" where there is no EAB activity. The wood can also be used for firewood, preferably used the sooner the better, preferably this winter. Of course wood cannot be taken out of the core or quarantined area unless it meets certain specifications. Michigan Department of Agriculture's web site for current information. MDA has established several marshaling yard sites where ash wood can be dropped for disposal free of charge.

DISPOSAL YARDS:

Private residents, tree care companies, etc. can drop off ash trees and limbs at these sites for no charge - totally free. A huge grinder will visit the sites periodically to chip this material, which will kill all or nearly all of the EAB larvae. The chips will then be burned at a co-generation plant which will take care of any larvae that managed to survive the chipping process. Encourage tree care professionals and residents to use these sites. It will help reduce the EAB population and the risk that infested wood will be moved out of the quarantined area.

Asplundh Tree Expert Co, Plymouth Ind. Yard
13101 Eckles Road
Plymouth, Mi 48170
Mon - Fri 8 -5 (closed 12-1); Sat 8-5

Mid Michigan Recycling – Ann Arbor Yard
4120 Platt Road. (corner of Ellsworth & Platt Rd.)
Ann Arbor, MI 48108 Mon – Fri 8 – 5; Sat 8-3

Mid Michigan Recycling – Macomb Yard
24935 21 Mile Road
Macomb, MI 48042 Mon - Fri 7 – 5; Sat 7-1

City of Westland Department of Public Service
37137 Marquette St.
Westland, MI 48185 Mon - Fri 7 - 5; Sat 9-5

Riverview Land Preserve
20863 Grange Rd. (corner of King & Grange Rd.)
Riverview, MI 48192 Mon – Fri 7 – 5; Sat 7-12 *winter hours

Education is a primary responsibility for many of us; we need to keep the public informed of progress on our understanding of the EAB. While MSU Extension has a primary charge for education, it is important that industry personnel also engage our clientele on this serious problem.

For more information visit web: http://www.msue.msu.edu/reg_se/roberts or contact your local *Michigan State University Extension Service office.*

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