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Arkansas State Plant Board Implements Emergency Quarantine to Slow Spread of Emerald Ash Borer

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. – Twenty-five Arkansas counties are included in an ash quarantine, voted into action today by the Arkansas State Plant Board to slow the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Quarantined items include firewood of all hardwood species, and the following ash items: nursery stock; green lumber with bark attached; other material living, dead, cut or fallen including logs, pulpwood, stumps, roots, branches, mulch and composted/un-composted chips (1 inch or greater). Firewood is the only quarantined item that relates to all hardwood; all other quarantined items are relative to ash, only.

Counties affected include: Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Clark, Cleveland, Columbia, Dallas, Drew, Garland, Grant, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Howard, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lincoln, Little River, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Saline, Sevier and Union counties.

“This quarantine is our best defense against the Emerald Ash Borer – a pest that has destroyed millions of ash trees across the United States. By slowing the movement of EAB, we hope to directly affect Arkansas ash trees as effectively as possible,” says Scott Bray, Director of Plant Industry, Arkansas State Plant Board, an agency within the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

Quarantined counties listed include six counties with confirmed EAB infestation sites (Clark, Columbia, Dallas, Hot Spring, Nevada, and Ouachita), while others included are considered “buffer” counties. Quarantined items can move freely within the quarantined area. The restrictions only apply to the movement of items listed within the quarantined counties to areas outside of them.

Ash trees comprise less than 2% of the merchantable trees in Arkansas. Five types of ash trees exist in Arkansas: Green Ash, White Ash, Carolina Ash, Blue Ash, and Pumpkin Ash. Owners of ash trees should look for damage that occurs from the top down, which may indicate presence of EAB. The EAB is a small beetle (1/2 inch in size) that originated in Asia. The first EAB discovery took place in Michigan, over a decade ago. EAB infestation usually kills the ash host within 2-5 years of infestation.

The Plant Board has developed the quarantine with input from the following agencies: Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, USDA-APHIS-PPQ, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Forestry Association, Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Timber Producers Association, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

The emergency quarantine will be effective for 120 days. During that time, the Arkansas State Plant Board will take steps to establish a permanent quarantine rule, which requires a public comment period. The permanent quarantine rule will replace the emergency quarantine.

For further quarantine details, contact the Arkansas State Plant Board at 501-225-1598 or email eab@aspb.ar.gov.

The mission of the Arkansas State Plant Board is to protect and serve the citizens of Arkansas and the agricultural and business communities by providing information and unbiased enforcement of laws and regulations thus ensuring quality products and services.