Emerald Ash Borer Treatment in Maryland

Cooperative Efforts Battle Emerald Ash Borer Beetle in Maryland

The Challenge

The Emerald Ash Borer, as its name implies, drills holes in ash trees, eventually killing them. On August 28, 2003, a Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) nursery inspector found infested ash trees at a nursery in Prince George's County, Maryland. The USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory confirmed the identification of EAB, and the MDA immediately issued a Stop Sale and Condemnation Seizure Order for all ash trees at the nursery.

The nursery, which had received 121 ash trees illegally shipped from a quarantine zone in Michigan, already sold 25 of the trees, while 96 were still at the nursery. To prevent a further infestation, the USDA and Michigan Department of Agriculture cautioned that all ash trees within ½ mile of the trees with EAB emergence holes were potentially infested, recommending their removal before EAB emergence the following year.

The Solution

An Incident Command System was initiated to deal with the complexity of locating and removing infected trees. The State Plant Regulatory Official was named Incident Commander, with individuals from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Maryland Forest Service (MFS), DNR Information Office, USDA APHIS PPQ, Maryland National Park and Planning Commission, MDA, Public Information Office, and Attorney General's Office serving on the planning team.

The Maryland nursery, in cooperation with MDA and USDA Forest Service Forest Pest Management (FPM), destroyed the remaining 96 unsold Michigan ash trees by chipping and burning. MDA worked with the nursery to locate the ash trees planted at four out-of-state sites. MDA removed these landscape trees and examined them for signs of EAB infestation and emergence. Emergence holes would indicate a new generation of EAB adults have hatched and could migrate to other areas.

Quick effort and intensive work by many cooperating entities eradicated EAB before it had a chance to get established.

Emerald ash borer beetle.

Because EAB larvae were found in the non-Michigan ash trees at the nursery, it was also likely that other ash at the nursery at the same time were also infested. Therefore, all ash trees sold between April 1 and September 1, 2003 were traced. A total of 119 non-Michigan ash trees were planted by the nursery's landscaping division and 8 trees were sold. Larvae were found in four of the planted trees, but the only ash trees with EAB emergence were those at the nursery. A survey conducted within a ½-mile radius of the nursery located 35 ash trees in urban settings and an additional 600 infected trees in forests just north of the nursery. Homeowners were contacted for removal of the trees on private property and public agencies for removal of the trees from public rights-of-way. A total of 928 ash trees were removed within the ½-mile buffer by April 15, 2004.

Resulting Benefits

Rapid response and intensive work by cooperating organizations eradicated EAB before it had a chance to become established. Tracking nursery sales led to the removal of potentially infested trees before the insect could spread to other areas in Maryland and two neighboring States.

Sharing Success

Successful eradication required the cooperation of several State, Federal, and private entities. Experts from the various groups worked together to protect ash trees within three States, forming new partnerships and strengthening interagency cooperation.

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