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EMERALD ASH BORER CONFIRMED IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) confirmed the first find in the state of emerald ash borer (EAB), an invasive beetle that attacks and kills all species of ash trees, in a tree located in Pulaski Park in Omaha. Nebraska will be the 27th state to confirm the presence of the pest since 2002.

EAB is a small, metallic-green beetle that is about ½ inch long. The larvae of this wood-boring insect tunnel under the bark of ash trees, disrupting the flow of water and nutrients, ultimately causing the tree to die. EAB infested ash trees will exhibit thinning or dying branches in the top of the tree, S-shaped larval galleries under bark, D-shaped exit holes and suckers (along the trunk and main branches).

“While it is unfortunate that we have confirmation of the pest in Nebraska, it is not unexpected –considering the close proximity to confirmed pest infestations in Iowa, Missouri and Kansas,” said NDA Director Greg Ibach. “The Nebraska Department of Agriculture, along with the United States Department of Agriculture, the Nebraska Forest Service and members of the Nebraska EAB Working Group have been preparing for the possibility this pest would enter the state.

NDA has issued a quarantine prohibiting ash nursery stock from leaving the quarantine area. The quarantine also regulates the movement of hardwood firewood and mulch, ash timber products and green waste material out of Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Washington and Dodge counties to assist in the prevention of human-assisted spread of the pest into un-infested areas. A USDA quarantine is also expected and NDA and USDA staff will work with the public and impacted industries to ensure compliance of the quarantines. NDA staff will continue to set and monitor EAB traps across the state to monitor for additional infestations.

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The Nebraska EAB working groups offers the following suggestions to help prevent the human-assisted spread of the pest:

- Use locally sourced firewood, burning it in the same county where you purchased it. Firewood is a transportation vessel for the pest.
- Only high value ash tress located within 15 miles of a known infestation should be considered for treatment. Trees that are experiencing declining health should be considered for removal.
- If you feel you have located an EAB infestation, please report it to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at (402) 471-2351, the Nebraska Forest Service at (402) 472-2944 or your local USDA office at (402) 434-2345.

Additional information on EAB, including the quarantine information, can be found on our website at: <http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/plant/entomology/eab/>. Additional information on EAB and Nebraska specific recommendations and guides can be found at www.eabne.info.

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