

West Bend

Interview with an EAB infested community

Mike Jentsch (Park & Forestry Superintendent)
interviewed by Olivia Witthun on 6-13-11

Background

- City of West Bend's population is approximately 30,000 people.
- Several years ago they changed their Official City Tree from a white ash to a Freeman maple.

EAB first confirmed in West Bend on June 9, 2010 (downtown area.)

- EAB emergence first detected in 2010 on June 3rd.
- 10 trees identified as infested after they surveyed the area.
- No other infested trees detected until June 2011.

EAB emergence first detected in 2011 on June 9th.

- 5 trees identified as infested on June 9th, 2011 - 1 white ash and 4 green. The average DBH was 6" – 14". Multiple adult beetles were in the process of emerging and one, 1" larvae was located.
- 3 trees identified as infested on June 10th, 2011 (approximately 2,200' from the Downtown infestation)

Inventory

- 12,370 total street trees (June 2011)
- 3,036 ash street trees (June 2011)
- 25% ash street tree population (June 2011)
- West Bend has a tree inventory which is kept up to date.

Value (all monetary values are 2008 figures)

- Value of all publicly owned trees \$12.5 million
- Value of publicly owned ash \$3.3 million
- Cost to remove and replant all publicly owned ash \$2.7 million
 - Cost to remove street ash trees (includes stump grinding and reseeded) \$1.6 million
 - Cost to remove park and other maintained area trees (includes stump grinding and reseeded) \$180,000
 - Cost to plant street ash trees \$913,000
 - Cost to plant park and other maintained area trees \$103,000

Surveying

After EAB was first detected in West Bend's downtown in 2010, 155 other ash trees in the immediate vicinity were climbed and surveyed. A few hundred others were surveyed from the ground or by using a bucket truck. Only 10 downtown ash trees were found to be infested after all the surveying. For the most part, the trees surveyed looked like your standard ash and weren't exhibiting any unusual signs of decline. The tree crew

incorporated simple surveying methods into their daily routine. If they found anything suspicious, they would peel that area on the tree. They didn't find any additional infested trees until this June. The one outward sign they keyed in on was a bit of bark peeling on a couple trees in the area where last year's infested trees were. After closer inspection, they were found to be infested. Again, the canopies looked like that of a typical ash. Adult beetle emergence was noted and photographed. As of June 13th, 8 new ash trees have been identified as infested with EAB in 2011.

Removals

Removals are done in-house. The forestry crew includes skilled climbers. West Bend is not pursuing any large-scale, preemptive ash removal plan. They are a bit more aggressive when making decisions about ash tree removals, but these are given consideration on a case by case basis. West Bend's one surprise came last week as they were removing the infested ash. They were astonished at the number of EAB adults flying around their heads as they removed the trees. One comment was that it was akin to a swarm of wasps.

Treatment

Currently 89 ash trees are being treated with Imidacloprid using soil injection performed in-house. These are highly valued trees in key locations.

Planting

West Bend's main focus for the past three years has been on ash tree replacement. They began planting ash tree replacements before they even removed a single infested tree. To date only 15 infested trees have been removed, but 135 have been planted. West Bend considers planting a diversity of trees in key locations their best guarantee. Street tree planting is typically contracted out.

Public Awareness

Mike says communication to local residents and public officials is the most important thing you can do. You don't want anyone to be surprised. West Bend has been diligent in their communication with the public and community officials. EAB was first found in Newburg in August of 2008, approximately 10 miles away. Less than two months later West Bend's City Council was hearing a presentation from the Park & Forestry Superintendent about EAB and its impact on their community. Last week, a resident commented on an ash tree in downtown newly marked with a green dot. "Uh oh, a green dot. That's not good. It must be for that Emerald Ash Borer bug." Which is true because they typically mark removals with orange paint, not green. So far the forestry division has only received 2 calls for six spotted tiger beetle.