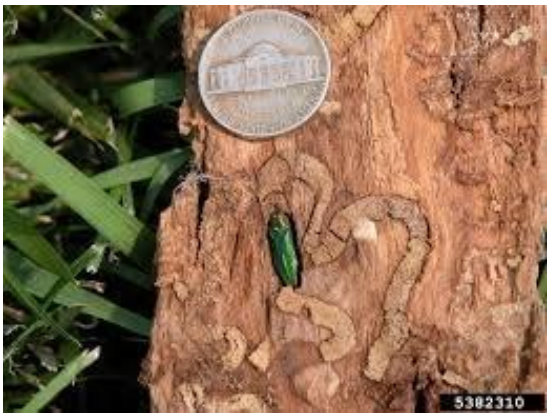

107 NJ towns could be impacted by emerald ash borer

BY DAVID PEIFER, ANJEC PROJECT DIRECTOR

A new threat to street trees and forest resources has arrived in New Jersey. Known as the emerald ash borer or "EAB", the insect arrived from China in 2002 and was first detected in Detroit, Since that time, it has spread to 25 states, killing hundreds of millions of trees.

The NJ Department of Agriculture has confirmed EAB presence in the Township of Bridgewater, Franklin (Somerset), Hillsborough, West Windsor, Ewing, and Pemberton, and has also identified 107 towns as "potentially impacted" based on 2014 data.

One way the Department monitors for EAB is by placing traps, as it has done in 87 communities. There are two types of traps: One is a triangular purple cloth structure that is tied in trees; the other looks like a stack of funnels placed in an open area. If you see a trap, don't disturb it.

Identifying the EAB

The adult insect is bright metallic green and small – only about ½ inch long and 1/8 inch wide – making it difficult to see in a forest. The female lays eggs in the bark of true ash trees (usually green ash or white ash). Once the eggs hatch, the larvae bore beneath the bark and feed on the steady flow of water and nutrients until they emerge as adults the following summer. The tree eventually dies after three to five years of infestation. Signs of trouble include:

- die-back beginning at the top of the tree,
- sprouting from roots and trunk,
- split bark with "s" shaped larval galleries,
- "d" shaped exit holes and
- Increase woodpecker activity.

A municipality's first concern should be its street trees and other potentially high-hazard trees in public spaces. If your town has a shade tree inventory, check to see if you have a substantial number of ash trees and where they're located. In the absence of a tree inventory, learn how to identify ash trees in your community. It is important to act quickly since die-off can come rapidly, increasing hazards and costs of removal and replanting.

Once the ash trees have been identified, examine them carefully for signs of infestation. If EAB is not present, individual trees can be treated with systemic pesticides as a preventive measure. However, before committing to this approach, recognize that treatment will have to continue for 12 to 15 years.

Larger infected trees may be salvaged for lumber and smaller ones for firewood, but they will deteriorate quickly if not removed. Plan to replace the lost trees with a native, non-invasive, non-host species adapted to the situation. Municipalities can find a template for reacting to EAB, in-depth advice and a cost calculator at

www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/eabcommunities.html.

For additional resources, contact the ANJEC Resource Center by calling 973-539-7547, or at resourcecenter@anjec.org