Ice storm tree damage offers chance to detect emerald ash borer

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Emerald ash borer overwinters about half an inch below the bark of ash trees. In its larval stage, the insect has a creamy white, flat, segmented body. (Michigan State University photo/Dave Cappert)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Wood debris from January ice storms in Southern Indiana and Kentucky provides an opportunity for emerald ash borer detection, said one Purdue University expert.

"The silver lining in these ice storms is that homeowners and city foresters can use fallen limbs as an early detection tool for EAB," said Purdue entomologist Cliff Sadof. "When cleaning up debris, people should look closely for woodpecker damage or D-shaped exit holes in the bark. If these signs are found, the debris should be inspected for overwintering larval-stage emerald ash borers about half an inch beneath the bark's surface."

In its larval stage, emerald ash borer has a creamy white, flattened, segmented body. They can grow up to an inch in length.

"Early detection is extremely important because it gives city foresters a chance to reduce the number of ash trees destroyed by the insect through infested tree removal and insecticide treatments," Sadof said. "It also gives replacement trees a chance to grow before EAB depletes the ash population."

If signs of emerald ash borer are found in Indiana, it should be reported to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources by calling (866) NO EXOTIC (663-9684). In Kentucky, finds should be reported to the state entomologist's office at (859) 257-5838.

In addition to inspecting for signs of emerald ash borer in wood debris, it's also important that the material is disposed of properly.

Indiana's quarantine does not permit ash wood from infested counties to cross county lines. A federal quarantine also prohibits regulated ash products from leaving the state. Quarantine violations can result in large fines.

More information about emerald ash borer detection and quarantines is available online at www.entm.purdue.edu/EAB/ or by contacting Sadof at (765) 494-5983, csadof[at]purdue.edu.

Provided by Purdue University