

Ash and Black Walnut Trees Threatened

You may have seen information in the media recently about the Emerald Ash Borer and Thousand Cankers Disease. Both of these have been found in Knox County, TN. You should be watchful in your landscape and in local forested areas for these pests.

The first, the emerald ash borer, is a very destructive tree pest initially introduced in the Detroit Michigan area approximately 20 years ago. Fortunately, this pest only attacks ash trees. According to Tom Womack with the TN Division of Forestry, an EAB was discovered at a truck stop in Knox County in late July.

Womack says the EAB can kill an ash tree within three years. The adults are fairly easy to identify as they are dark green, one-half inch long, and one-eighth inch wide. They potentially can be seen in the adult life stage from April through September. They overwinter in the bark making d-shaped exit holes in the spring. Ash trees can be protected with soil drenches, trunk drenches, and trunk injections.

Pay particular attention to your ash trees. Symptoms such as dieback in the top of the tree, sprouting around the base of the tree, bark splitting, and woodpecker feeding are clues that there may be an infestation. When inspecting the tree trunk, you need to watch for d-shaped exit holes approximately one-eighth inch wide. If you find loose bark, look for s-shaped galleries and larvae that may be feeding.

The other pest is Thousand Cankers Disease was discovered in East Tennessee. Thousand Cankers Disease, which affects the black walnut tree, is caused by a fungus. This disease is spread by the walnut twig beetle.

Landowners should watch for loss of leaves and branches in the crown of the tree. Gradually, larger branches die resulting in death of the tree usually within three years.

Control of TCD has proven difficult because the fungal organism continues to spread after the twig beetle is controlled. Removal of affected trees is the only way that has been proven effective at reducing the spread of the disease.

The Tennessee Department of Ag is encouraging area residents to not transport firewood to other areas of the state, to not transport firewood across state lines and to watch for infestations in your ash trees.