

# OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

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## PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 15, 2016

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### Check your trees for pests in August

Are your trees in good shape? August is Tree Check Month and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking people across the nation to check their trees for signs of invasive insect damage. While residents in many states are dealing with aggressive infestation of various insects, Oklahoma is on the lookout for the emerald ash borer and gypsy moth, both of which have done extensive damage elsewhere and pose a potential threat to the state.

#### Emerald ash borer

Named for its metallic green color, the emerald ash borer is an exotic beetle whose larvae are killing ash trees across the eastern half of the nation and moving west. It has not been detected in Oklahoma yet, but is confirmed in the surrounding states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Colorado. Signs of infestation include D-shaped exit holes in the bark of ash trees, left by adult emerald ash borers when they emerge in the spring. Another indicator of infestation is heavy woodpecker damage on ash trees, as woodpeckers like to eat the emerald ash borer larvae.

#### Gypsy moth

One of North America's most devastating forest pests, the gypsy moth is primarily located in the Northeast, but is spreading west and has shown up in many states, including Oklahoma. Gypsy moth larvae prefer hardwoods, but may feed on several hundred different species of trees and shrubs, with the list of hosts undoubtedly expanding as the insect spreads south and west. Signs of infestation in trees include loss of leaves, deep bark cracks, holes and wounds and buff-colored egg sacks on trunks and branches. Landowners are encouraged to cut down and burn infested trees.

Should residents find tree damage, they are encouraged to make note of what they see, when and if possible take a photo and send to Oklahoma Forestry Services.

"We encourage Oklahomans to take a few minutes and inspect their trees to look for any signs of insect damage," said Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese. "And we ask for your help in preventing or slowing the spread of these pests by simply not moving firewood."

(MORE)

Hauling firewood to a campsite that is more than 50 miles away is expediting the movement of invasive insects that can live inside the firewood. Campers and hunters across the nation are asked to buy firewood as close as possible to the place where they are going to burn it. Moving firewood for long distances is the fastest way to expedite the spread of invasive insects. For more information about moving firewood, visit [www.dontmovefirewood.org](http://www.dontmovefirewood.org).

For more information about invasive insects and related issues in Oklahoma visit Oklahoma Forestry Services' website [www.forestry.ok.gov](http://www.forestry.ok.gov), call OFS at 405-522-6158 or email at [okforest.ag.ok.gov](mailto:okforest.ag.ok.gov).

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Photo captions:

Pictured above is an adult gypsy moth, one of North America's most devastating forest pests.

This photo captures the characteristic metallic green sheen of the emerald ash borer that has been found in Oklahoma's neighboring states, but to date, not in Oklahoma.