

European house borer

Background

European house borer (EHB) *Hylotrupes bajulus* is a destructive pest of seasoned coniferous timber including pine, fir and spruce. If allowed to become established it can cause major structural damage to buildings that have been built with untreated pinewood.

EHB (also known as Old house borer) is found in Europe, Middle East, South and North Africa, South and North America, China and Asia Minor. The first discovery of EHB in Western Australia was made in 2004. The pest is suspected to have come into Western Australia in imported pine timber as larvae.



EHB larvae, adult male and adult female beetle

EHB damage

Adult beetles lay eggs into dead pine trees and dead branches of living pine trees. EHB can also infest pinewood timber used for house roofing and framing as well as pinewood furniture, boxes, crates and pallets.

EHB larvae create tunnels as they bore through pinewood causing damage to timber. Long term EHB infestation has the potential to cause significant structural damage to homes built with untreated pinewood.

Identification

Larvae hatch from eggs laid in dead pinewood. They are creamy white in colour with a rippled body and enlarged head. Larvae can grow up to 40mm in length.

Beetles are brownish-black to greyish-black and have a slightly flattened appearance. Wings are usually black and may have distinctive white patches. The top surface of the body behind the head has two raised black shiny knobs. Adults grow to 8-25mm in length with antennae about half as long as the body.

In Western Australia EHB can live in its larval state for 2-5 years before it matures and emerges from the timber as an adult beetle, to begin the life cycle again.



EHB larvae exposed in pinewood



EHB exit holes are oval in shape



A recently emerged EHB beetle

Signs of EHB infestation

- Exit holes are created by adult beetles when they emerge from pinewood. The exit holes are oval-shaped, 5-10mm in length and always run in line with the grain of the timber.
- Frass, a mixture of powdery wood dust and excrement, can sometimes be found below the timber where beetles have emerged.
- Dead beetles can sometimes be found in spider webs near infested timber.
- Long blister-like swellings can sometimes be seen under the surface of processed timber such as pine furniture and structural beams.

Is my suburb affected?

Restricted Movement Zones (RMZs) are buffer areas surrounding sites where EHB infestation has previously been found. The owner or occupier of properties located within a RMZ must comply with restrictions under the *Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (European House Borer) Regulations 2006*. These restrictions apply to the movement, storage, treatment and disposal of untreated, unwanted, dead or seasoned pinewood such as dead trees, old furniture and pallets located within an RMZ.

For more information on the restrictions or for detailed RMZ maps visit the EHB website agric.wa.gov.au/ehb.

Management of EHB within RMZ areas

Building standards require the use of treated pinewood or other non-susceptible material when building in RMZ areas (see Building Commission Advisory Notes 2009/002 and 2009/004).

Homes built with untreated structural pinewood should be regularly inspected by an EHB accredited pest controller. Ask your pest controller if they have completed the Challenger TAFE online EHB course.

Important disclaimer

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EHB larvae samples collected by project officers

Dispose of unwanted pine timber (including tree waste, off-cuts, articles and furniture) through green council bins, council verge collection or direct deposit to local council refuse facilities.

Do not collect or remove pine articles placed on verges for local government collections.

Protect untreated pinewood by storage in a suitable building, enclosure or keep fully enclosed in plastic wrapping material.

Business should contact an EHB regulatory officer on 1800 084 881 for guidance on movement, storage, timber treatments and disposal of pinewood articles susceptible to EHB infestation.

For more information visit the EHB website agric.wa.gov.au/ehb or contact the Pest and Disease Information Service on 1800 084 881.

