

LOOK OUT FOR European House Borer



Above: Adult European house borer – Picture not to scale
(Dept of Agriculture Western Australia)

What is it?

The European house borer (EHB) *Hylotrupes bujulus* Linnaeus, is a destructive pest of seasoned coniferous timber, including pine, fir and spruce. If allowed to become established it can cause major structural damage of buildings.

Timbers commonly used for structural purposes in Australia, including radiata pine, southern pine, Douglas fir, hoop pine and bunya pine have all been shown to be susceptible to damage by EHB.

Most often the EHB infests roof timbers, but is also known to infest architraves, door frames and timber articles such as pine furniture. Evidence of the pest can also be found in living trees with dried out branch stubs and damaged branches and trunks, dead trees and logs.

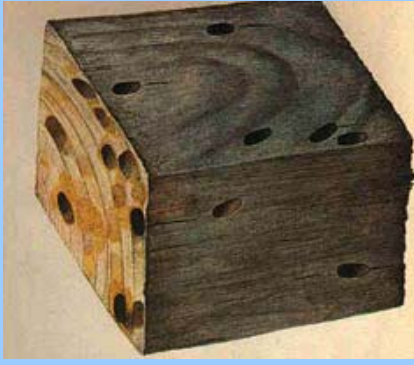
Where did it come from?

The EHB is found in Europe, the Middle East (Turkey), North Africa, South Africa, South America, USA, China and Asia Minor. The EHB has been detected several times in Australia but those infestations were eradicated by fumigation.

What to look for

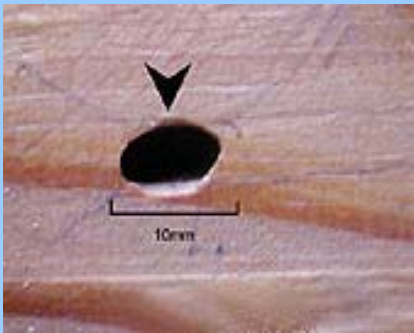
The most visible evidence to indicate that the structural timber of a building or timber article is infested with EHB are the presence of:

- Adult beetles which are brownish-black to black and have a slightly flattened appearance. Beetle wing are usually all black and may have distinctive white patches. The top surface of the first body segment behind the head has two raised, black, shiny knobs, two of these are like eyes. Adults are about 18-25mm in length with antennae that are about half as long as the body.
- Characteristic oval-shaped holes on the surface of infested timber from which the adult beetle has emerged. Oval-shaped holes are about 5mm by 10mm in size.
- Frass, which is a mixture of fine powdery particles of wood dust and pellets of excrement, can sometimes be found on the floor below infested timber where adult beetles have emerged from holes.
- Galleries within the timber are formed by the boring larvae and are frequently tightly packed with frass. Galleries within the timber rarely break through the surface of the timber and therefore are seldom detected. However, long blister-like swellings under the surface of the thin layer of uneaten wood caused by the tightly-packed frass may be evident.



Above: Off-cut of timber exhibiting oval-shape exit holes caused by emerging adult beetles

Below: Close-up of adult beetle exit hole – Picture not to scale (CD Pless and G Schweiger UT E&PP)



Above: Exposed larvae boring through timber. Picture not to scale (Clemson University USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series)

Other evidence to indicate EHB timber infestation includes the presence of:

- A soft scraping sound made by the larvae as they feed which can often be heard at night and may be audible from some distance.
- EHB larvae within the timber. Larvae are elongate and cylindrical in shape with an enlarged and flattened head. The length of larvae varies between 19-41mm and around 7.5mm wide at maturity. Larvae can be identified by a row of three small black single-lens eyes on each side of the head.
- Batches of up to 120 eggs which are laid in crevices or cracks in timber.

Spread

The EHB has a relatively long larval period of 1 to 12 years, mostly spent within the timber. This enables the pest to infest a range of coniferous woods undetected and has contributed to its spread to other parts of the world in timber and timber articles such as furniture.

Adult EHB are considered to be strong fliers and can cover a considerable distance to infest new areas.

The pest is able to live in a wide variety of climatic conditions, however, it prefers temperate habitats and is usually found in coastal regions.

Management

The EHB is a quarantine pest and the only effective treatment once infected is fumigation with approved fumigants applied by licensed pest control operators. Timbers can be treated to prevent infestation.

Contact

Should you suspect that you have either detected an adult beetle, larvae, exit holes, or evidence of frass, report the detection during working hours using the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on free call 1800 084 881.

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Prepared by: The Forest Health Consultative Committee on European House Borer.

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Report suspect detections to your local department of agriculture or primary industry, call the

EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881

For more information:
www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/pesth hotline