

N.C. Forest Service Has Detected the Emerald Ash Borer in Anson County

The N.C. Forest Service has deemed five new counties positive for the emerald ash borer (EAB). Newly impacted counties are Anson, Bertie, Duplin, Martin and Sampson, bringing the number of counties in the state where the tree-killing insect has been detected to 76.

“Seasonal trapping for EAB typically runs from late March to early May. During that time, we were able to extract adult beetles from ash stands in Anson, Bertie, Duplin and Sampson counties,” said Jim Moeller, forest health specialist with the N.C. Forest Service. “While we weren’t able to physically uncover the insect in Martin County, current signs and symptoms found in ash trees indicate EAB infestations are already underway. We’re going to consider Martin County positive based on these indicators so landowners will know what to expect and can plan accordingly.”

EAB is a metallic green beetle that bores into ash trees and feeds on tissues beneath the bark, ultimately killing the tree. Adult borers lay eggs on the bark of ash trees. When the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the bark and feed on tissues of the tree. This disrupts the movement of nutrients and water within the tree, causing the tree’s slow death typically in three to five years.

The signs and symptoms of an EAB infestation include thinning and dying crowns; increased woodpecker activity that causes the tree to look like it is losing patches of bark; small, 1/8-inch D-shaped exit holes where adult beetles emerged from the trees; galleries on the inside of the bark; cream-colored larvae; and epicormic sprouting or sprouting from the main stem of the tree. Host plants include all native ash trees and native white fringetree. The Chinese white fringetree, often planted for ornamental purposes, is believed to be resistant.

Adult EAB beetles are about a half-inch long and 1/8-inch wide. Under their wing covers, their bodies are a metallic purple-red color. In North Carolina, the adult EAB is typically active from late spring to early summer, likely April through June. EAB larvae may be found under the bark of the tree most of the year.

EAB has been found in more than 75% of North Carolina counties including all of Western North Carolina, most of the Piedmont and continues to track east. The entire state is under a quarantine for EAB which prohibits the movement of ash plant parts, the insect itself, ash nursery stock and all hardwood firewood into nonquarantined areas such as central Tennessee, most of Alabama and Florida.

The spread of invasive insects in the state is often due to human activity through the transportation of infested wood products such as firewood. It is strongly recommended that people burn local or treated firewood to reduce the spread of invasive pests.

The N.C. Forest Service Forest Health Branch monitors the spread of invasive pests. People who suspect there is an infested tree in an area near them should contact their county ranger. Contact information can be found online at:

www.ncforestservice.gov/contacts.

A map showing emerald ash borer detections throughout North Carolina is available at: ncforestservice.gov/forest_health/pdf/Map_EAB_NCTracking.pdf.

For more information about EAB, visit ncforestservice.gov and follow the links under the “Forest Health” section. To view current federal EAB quarantines, visit: www.emeraldashborer.info.

SPCC ‘53 Ideas Pitch Competition’ Entry Ends May 31

Enter for a chance to win \$10,000 in seed funding!

South Piedmont Community College’s Small Business Center is leading the fifth-annual “53 Ideas Pitch Competition,” an initiative that began in 2020 with support from Fifth Third Bank to provide anyone with an idea access to the capital, training and social connections needed to take an idea and turn it into a viable business.

Contestants will not only compete for cash awards; they will also access training resources and expanded networks to build social connections. Training and coaching on pitching, financing, forecasting and general business will be available to every participant, even if they do not make the top 53. These free resources will be offered by Small Business Centers located at community colleges throughout the region, including Central Piedmont, Cleveland, Gaston, Mitchell, Rowan-Cabarrus, South Piedmont and Stanly.

“We are thrilled to spearhead this year’s 53 Ideas Pitch Competition once more, and extend our gratitude to Fifth Third Bank for their ongoing support,” said South Piedmont’s Director of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Renee Hode. “Recognizing the hurdles and disparities within entrepreneurship, this competition serves as a gateway, offering invaluable resources along with capital that are crucial for transforming innovative ideas into thriving ventures.”

To enter individuals have 53 seconds to share their idea in the form of a video submitted at 53ideas.com.

- Round one is based on the idea. Contestants do not have to be pitch pros. They just need to share who they are, their idea, the problem it solves, how it is new or superior to an existing product or service, and how they can make it happen.
- Judges will select the top 53 ideas and those contestants will move on in the competition to receive training to help them prepare a 3-minute pitch for the second round of the competition.
- Judges will then narrow the field to the top 10 and those selected will receive \$250 before moving forward to compete in the Pitch Day finale.
- The first-place winner will receive \$10,000, the second-place winner will receive \$5,000, and the third-place winner will receive \$2,500 to help turn their idea into a viable business.

“We are committed to supporting entrepreneurship across this region and throughout North Carolina,” said Joel Dancy, Vice President, Community & Economic Development, Carolinas Region, Fifth Third Bank. “We are very excited to be supporting the 53 Ideas Pitch Competition for the fifth year in a row because it not only helps in the short term with access to capital for the winners, but it also helps in the long term through financial education for all participants.”

Last year’s competition received more than 100 entries. Tequia Williams, founder of Jexsii placed first and earned \$10,000 in seed funding. To learn more and enter this year’s pitch competition by the May 31 deadline, visit 53ideas.com.

How to Handle Picky Eaters

Almost every parent knows the struggle of a child who just won’t eat their dinner. Picky eaters can be a challenge, but there are lots of ways to help children learn to try and like new foods.

First, it’s important for you to have good eating habits. As the adult in their life, your kids look to you to know how to behave. If you are open to new foods and eat a well-balanced diet, your kids will be more likely to do this too! Don’t encourage picky eaters by preparing special meals. Plan meals that include lots of food groups, and have everyone choose from what’s on the table. This will help kids learn to like new foods more quickly and will save you a lot of time and energy. It’s also helpful to let kids help choose and prepare meals. This doesn’t mean that your picky eater should get to plan the menu, but do give them some choices. Try letting them choose the vegetable, grain, or protein type, and ask them to help you in the kitchen. When kids feel like they have a say in what is served, they’re much more likely to be excited about eating it.

Finally, there are some foods your child just won’t like, and that’s okay! As long as they give new foods a fair chance, it’s normal if they don’t love every single food they try. *By Judith Garcia, EFNEP Educator*

Lilesville’s July 4th Parade is Set for June 29

Be sure to mark your calendar for the Town of Lilesville’s annual July 4th Parade and celebration. This year’s event is scheduled for Saturday, June 29, beginning at 11:00 a.m.

More information about the celebration will be provided at a later date.



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