



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Emerald Ash Borer!

By Paul Diegnau, CGCS

Several years ago, the Minnesota Department of Ag, Minnesota DNR and the University of Minnesota Extension Service created the Forest Pest First Detector Program. This program has trained over 300 volunteers to do on-site tree inspections for property owners who have contacted the MDA's Arrest-the-Pest Hotline. Volunteers are trained to identify the tell-tale signs of EAB, Gypsy Moth and Asian Longhorned Beetle and then report their findings to the MDA. Officials in other states consider this program cutting-edge, highly innovative and, as such, are copying the program format for their own use. I joined the program in 2008 and recently attended a refresher course here in the Twin Cities. Statistics reveal that Minnesotans have become much more aware of invasive specie threats. The Arrest-the-Pest Hotline(651-201-6684 / 888-545-6684) recorded a mere 116 calls in 2008 but that figure ballooned to 1,814 calls last year. In 2009, First Detectors were dispatched to investigate 228 sites. I am personally looking forward to more site visits during the 2010 season though I hope my expertise will not be needed at Keller GC anytime soon. As the crow flies, we are located 6.5 miles from the nearest infestation site, so the clock is ticking rather loudly! The St. Anthony Park infestation was found rather quickly compared to average discovery timelines so it will be interesting to see where this pest shows up next and how far it has spread.

Here is a very quick refresher and points of interest to help you when approached by members or players with EAB questions:

- EAB cannot be eradicated though its progress can be slowed.
- Infested firewood is its primary mode of transportation.
- The counties of Ramsey, Washington and Houston are under quarantine. No ash material can leave these counties.
- Visual symptoms include thinning of the tree canopy, basal sprouting, bark splitting, D-shaped exit holes, S-shaped galleries and noticeable woodpecker activity.
- Minnesota has over 900 million ash trees so we stand to lose big both economically and environmentally.
- Begin insecticide treatments if your trees are within 10-15 miles of a known EAB infestation and you wish to save them.

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It is that time of year again. The Minnesota State Legislature is back in session!

Who knows what bills will be introduced in 2010 but be assured that something that affects our industry is sure to develop. We are fortunate to have Paul Eckholm, CGCS, Jack MacKenzie, CGCS, and the newly formed Turfgrass Government Affairs Committee keeping an eye on the current activities at the Capitol. If the call goes out, please make time to participate in the process. As an Association, we can have a tremendous impact on the direction that new legislation takes. The phosphorous fertilizer ban of 2005 was a perfect example of this. Several MGCSA members testified before legislators and were able to convince them to exclude golf courses from the ban. This month's *Hole Notes* issue contains a letter to MGCSA from the MDA that congratulates us on the successful working relationship developed between the two groups over the phosphorous issue. Let us not forget the role the University of Minnesota played in creating the educational certification component that allows us to apply phosphorous. Speaking of the U of M, make sure to check out the Brian Horgan/Carl Rosen article in the February issue of GCM. The article, entitled "Restricting phosphorous fertilizer use" recaps the progression of phosphorous legislation in Minnesota from the local level beginning in 1985 to the state level in 2005. The article emphasizes the success of working hand-in-hand with regulatory agencies. It makes a wonderful template for things to come.

Spring is almost here and I can imagine most of you are getting antsy, ready to face the challenges of another golf season. If there is little to no frost in the ground, as I keep hearing, it could prove to be an interesting "unveiling" this spring. Time will tell. Until next month...

- Paul Diegnau, CGCS

HOLE NOTES

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