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EUROPEAN HOUSE BORER CAUSES CONCERN IN WA

PERTH – February 2005 – One of the world’s most destructive pests has been found in a number of suburbs in the Perth metro area, igniting fears that this ‘creepy crawley’ may worm its way into WA homes in the future.

When the European House Borer (or EHB), which targets untreated pine, was identified in Parkerville in January 2004, the State Government established an EHB Program team, managed by the Forest Products Commission and the Department of Agriculture, to investigate the extent of EHB in Western Australia.

In close consultation with other government departments and industry groups the EHB Program has developed a monitoring system to assess the extent of the pest. So far evidence of EHB has been found in 18 suburbs.

According to Peter Adam, General Manager of Envirotechnics, one of the handful of pest control companies trained by the Department of Agriculture to inspect homes for evidence of EHB activity, so far no sign of the pest has been found in any structural timber.

“Our concern is that a great number of homes in Perth contain roofs constructed from untreated pine. Although at this stage there has been no evidence that the EHB has made it into roofing in Perth, residents and home builders must remain vigilant,” he said.

The most obvious signs of infestation are oval shape emergence holes in the timber, running in line with the grain of the wood. Sometimes the dust and droppings can be seen on the floor below the timber where an adult has emerged.

The borer tunnels through the wood, packing its tunnels, or galleries, with wood dust and droppings as it goes, and as it nears the surface, narrow blisters along the grain of the wood may be seen. Where there are exposed untreated pine beams or pine products, the borer may also be heard chewing the timber.

The news is not all doom and gloom however, and there is a solution available.

Trials were conducted by Envirotechnics Pest Management in conjunction with an entomologist from Osmose, one of the world’s leading manufacturer of timber preservative treatments, which involved the treatment of roofing timbers to a new house under construction prior to the ceiling being fixed.

“The results of the trial using a treatment called Enviro-Bor, exceeded all expectations and will now be offered to builders around the metropolitan area, as an option for their clients worried about attack from EHB,” said Peter Adam.

“This treatment, which is exclusive to Envirotechnics, has been proven around the world as being a very effective solution both pre and post construction. This treatment carries a warranty for the service life of the timber, and we are proud to be the only pest control company trained by Osmose in WA to administer this treatment,” he added.

In a recent release issued by the Department of Consumer Protection, householders in Perth’s hills suburbs were being warned against bogus pest control companies offering to treat their homes against EHB or risk demolition orders

“People living in suburbs that are being surveyed by the Department of Agriculture for European House Borer, are being warned not to fall for these scamsters. All EHB team members carry identification, and Envirotechnics staff do not operate on a door to door basis,” said Mr Adam.

“Any approaches should be immediately reported to Consumer Protection on telephone number 1300 30 40 54”, he advised.

Anyone who suspected the presence of European House Borer in dead pine trees, untreated pine timber or pine furniture or goods, should contact the Freecall Hotline to arrange an expert examination.

More information about European House Borer is available online at www.ehb.wa.gov.au or by calling the Freecall Hotline on 1800 084 881.

To treat your home, call Envirotechnics on 9231 4744.

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