EXPLORATION FOR EMERALD ASH BORER IN CHINA

Houping Liu¹, Toby R. Petrice², Leah S. Bauer¹,², Robert A. Haack¹,², Ruitong Gao³, and Tonghai Zhao³

¹ Department of Entomology, Michigan State University, 243 Natural Science Building, East Lansing, MI 48824
² USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station, 220 Nisbet Building, 1407 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823
³ Research Institute of Forest Protection, Chinese Academy of Forestry, Beijing 10091, People’s Republic of China

ABSTRACT

In June 2002, the emerald ash borer (EAB), Agrilus planipennis Fairmaire (Coleoptera: Buprestidae), native to several Asian countries, was identified as the cause of ash (Fraxinus spp.) mortality in greater than 2,500 square miles of southeastern Michigan and southwestern Ontario; more recent infestations were found in Ohio, Maryland, and Virginia in 2003. Federal and state agencies adopted a strategy of EAB eradication in North America. Should eradication fail, EAB management will require augmentation of existing natural enemies or introduction of EAB natural enemies from Asia. The only literature known for EAB is from China, where EAB is a sporadic pest of ash (Yu 1992); a braconid parasitoid, Spathius sp. (Hymenoptera: Braconidae), was recently reported from EAB in Tianjin Province in an ash plantation (Xu Gongtian 2003).

In addition to our survey of EAB natural enemies in Michigan, we are studying the natural enemy complex of EAB in China. To this end, we explored 29 field sites in Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Hebei, Tianjin, and Shandong Provinces in northeastern China from 21 October to nine November 2003. The habitats were variable, ranging from natural forests, nurseries, plantations, city parks, streets, and yards; ash species included Fraxinus mandshurica, F. chinensis subsp. chinensis, and F. chinensis subsp. rhychophylla. At each site we surveyed 30-60 trees for EAB and potential natural enemies. EAB was present in all provinces except Shandong and in 9 of the 29 sites; five sites showed signs of past infestation such as old exit holes, callused galleries, bark splits, and epicormic branches. EAB seems to prefer ash trees in open areas and at the edges of the forests. Gregarious ectoparasitoid larvae and pupae, probably Spathius sp., were found attacking EAB at four of these sites; at one site, 50 percent of EAB larvae were parasitized.