

Report beetle threats to save CT trees

Cape Town residents are being called upon to help stop the spread of the tree beetle fungus by reporting all sightings of infected trees. Awareness of the symptoms and spread of the infestation could save thousands of trees.



Polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB) has been reported and confirmed in the northern suburbs of Helderrant, La Sandra and Worlds View in Somerset West. The City of Cape Town anticipates that more locations will be reported as public awareness increases and trees on properties and streets within the vicinity of the initial sighting are inspected.

The PSHB invasion has resulted in the death of thousands of trees in other parts of the country. The beetle attacks various tree species by digging tiny tunnels to lay eggs. They also carry a *Fusarium* fungus on their bodies which the beetle 'farms' as its food source. Eventually the fungus blocks the tree's internal transport system and depending on the tree species and level of infestation, this leads to the death of the tree.

PSHB attacks a variety of tree species which include maples, oak, avocado and plane trees. Some acacia willows, and indigenous trees can also be affected. These species include some of the most common and valuable trees in Cape Town, and the threat posed to the indigenous species is a serious risk to ecosystems.



FORESTRY

The spread of shot hole borer beetles in South Africa is proving tough to control

Wilhelm de Beer and Trudy Paap 5 Nov 2018



Although symptoms differ among species, the most common symptoms of infected trees are:

- Gum or sap oozing on the bark
- Visible entry and exit holes
- Sugary exudates
- Sawdust or frass visible around holes
- Fungal staining on sapwood or outer bark
- Dieback of part of the tree or the entire tree

Currently there is no fully effective or registered treatment for either the insect, or the fungus. Severely infested trees are removed and destroyed in order to contain the spread of the disease. Special care has been taken throughout the entire removal process (i.e. cutting down, chipping, transporting and disposal). Minor infestations on some species which are non-reproductive hosts, may be monitored or treated.

"Members of public are urgently requested not to cut down infested trees and transport infested material to any dump or tip sites. This may spread the fungus into unaffected areas," said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Community Services and Health, Councillor Zahid Badroodien.

Rather, sightings should be reported at <https://www.capetowninvasives.org.za/shot-hole-borer>. Alternatively call 0860 103 089 and state that a possible PSHB case is being reported. The exact location of the sighting is very important.



AGRICULTURE

A tiny beetle and its deadly fungus is threatening South Africa's trees

Wilhelm de Beer 28 Feb 2018

"Residents should keep an eye on their own trees, but also those on the properties of friends and relatives and help us spread awareness about the threat. There is still time to contain the risks, if we collectively look for signs in distressed trees and report sightings immediately to specialised staff at the City, who are trained

to act quickly in order to save our trees," said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Spatial Planning and Environment, Councillor Marian Nieuwoudt.

To read more about the invasive beetle, visit <https://bit.ly/2SfuySw>. Further information is also available at www.fabinet.up.ac.za/index.php/research/7

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>