

# Indiana approves use of new insecticide to fight tree-killing bug

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INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The state chemist's office has given Indiana's arborists approval to use a new insecticide that has shown promise killing an invasive insect which destroys ash trees.

The insecticide, called Tree-age, is essentially a poison that kills the emerald ash borer when its grub-like larvae feed on tree tissue infused with the chemical.

Purdue University entomologist Cliff Sadof said the insecticide is "very promising" based on tests conducted in Michigan, which also recently approved its use. Purdue scientists are now conducting field tests in Indiana to gauge its effectiveness.

Tree-age was developed over the past four years by the Swiss agrochemical company Syngenta and the Massachusetts firm Arborjet.

In tests done last year by Michigan State University researchers, the insecticide killed more than 99 percent of ash borer larvae in treated trees and 100 percent of the metallic-green adult beetles that ate the tree's leaves, according to preliminary results.

While other insecticides that kill the ash borer are on the market, Tree-age seems to be more effective, said Jodie Ellis, a Purdue entomologist. And unlike other insecticides that need to be applied annually, she said Tree-age is applied every two years.

"That's going to be of great interest to homeowners I'm sure," she said.

Ellis said the new emamectin benzoate-based pesticide could help slow the spread of the insect in 17 mostly northeastern Indiana counties where infestations have been confirmed.

The ash borer, a native to Asia, has killed more than 30 million ash trees in southeastern Michigan alone since 2002, with millions more lost in Ohio and Indiana.

Its larvae feed on the layer of wood just beneath the bark, cutting off water and nutrients and killing the tree within three to four years.

Tree-age was approved for use in Indiana on March 28 by the Office of Indiana State Chemist at Purdue University. It is federally regulated and can only be applied by a certified arborist.

Ellis said the insecticide must be injected just beneath the tree's bark into the tissues that move nutrients and water to and from the tree's branches and leaves.

"What it's doing in essence is making that tissue poisonous to the larvae," she said. "But if you don't get it into exactly the right place the insecticide will just pool where you shot it and it won't spread through the tree."

Ellis said Tree-age is expected to be available in Indiana by early May.

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On the Net:

Purdue ash borer page: <http://www.entm.purdue.edu/EAB/locations/index.shtml#indiana>