



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW PEST IN COUNTY KILLS OAKS, CREATES FIRE HAZARD *Agriculture and Fire Officials Need Public's Help to Identify and Report Bug*

Several agencies are coming together to get an important message out to the public – be on the lookout for the gold-spotted oak borer and the signs of its destruction.

The pest is a brown beetle with gold spots on its wings. It has been around in the county for several years, but only recently did officials discover that the beetle, combined with the drought, have contributed to the death of thousands of oak trees.

This beetle is different than typical wood-boring bugs because it doesn't feed on dead, dying or recently killed trees. It attacks healthy, mature oaks on main stems and large branches. Larvae feed on the underside of the bark, causing strips or patches of the tree to die – eventually killing the entire tree after repeated attacks.

Infestations have been identified in Julian, Alpine, Pine Valley, Descanso and the Morena Village area on private land as well as land owned by the County, state and federal governments. The damage is seen in several types of oaks, including the coast live oak, canyon live oak and California black oak.

Experts think the gold-spotted oak borer may have spread to San Diego County under the bark of firewood, and the public is urged not to transport firewood in and out of the county until more is known about the pest.

The County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures is working with the County Department of Planning and Land Use, the Farm and Home Advisor, CALFIRE, and the U.S. Forest Service to create an education and outreach plan to provide more information to the public and stop the spread of the pest.

For more details, visit www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland.

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