

New Invasive Pest Detected in Santa Cruz County: The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer

Ask Laura, Steve Tjosvold

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The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) was detected in a survey trap by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) recently in Santa Cruz County along Highway 17 close to the Santa Clara County border. The tiny beetle is part of a new insect-disease complex that is threatening avocado, coast live oak, box elder and other trees in Southern California. The newly identified beetle penetrates the bark of many hosts and carries a symbiotic fungus (*Fusarium* species) that the larvae feed on. The fungus can then cause branch dieback in susceptible hosts. The same beetle and fungus have also been found in Israel, where the complex has caused severe damage to avocado trees since 2009.

The situation in Santa Cruz County is being sorted out by CDFA. The one beetle detection in the survey trap is only an indication that it is in the area, and it is not currently considered established in the area. Delimitation traps may be installed and potential hosts may need to be inspected in the oak / California bay woodland that the trap was placed.

PSHB is a Q-rated pest, which is a temporary designation of a pest that is suspected to be of economic importance. Information needs to still be gathered before any determination might be made if or how regulatory action would be enforced. So far, no quarantine has been established. PSHB could be transported in firewood, solid wood packing or shipping material, and possibly nursery stock with at least 2-inch diameter trunk diameter.

For more information and images of symptoms see:

http://cifr.ucr.edu/polyphagous_shot_hole_borer.html

<http://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=8170>

http://ucanr.edu/sites/socaloakpests/Polyphagous_Shot_Hole_Borer/

Thank you to Marylou Nicoletti, Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner, for providing information about CDFA efforts in detection and delimitation for PSHB.