

Brea Trees Threatened by Pest Infestation

A highly destructive insect known as the Shot Hole Bore is a newer pest harming trees throughout Brea. While there is no sure-fire solution to eliminate the Shot Hole Bore, the best strategy so far for affected specimens has been a multi-pronged approach to reduce tree contamination and try to control the pest. Without treatment, infected trees die and disease quickly spreads.

The City of Brea has used a combination of soil soaking and trunk injections to combat shot hole bores in sycamore, poplar and oak tree varieties in public parks. Next, there is a need to move across neighborhood areas where the bore has also been detected in many mature parkway specimens. Since last November, the Public Works staff has continued with treatments through soil soaks and trunk injections as its best option to interrupt the bore's life cycle.

The City will only treat trees in the public right-of-way or at City facilities, which are normally maintained by the Public Works Department. Trees growing on private property are the responsibility of owners.

Background information

A healthy, even tree canopy adds to community aesthetics and enhances property values. Trees provide visual relief in an urban environment and have a number environmental benefits. Brea has earned recognition as a Tree City USA for over 18 years now. Therefore, it has long been a community value to maintain the health of trees as a wise public investment.

The Shot Hole Bore is a very small insect recently introduced to this region and traced back from Southeast Asian shipments in 2010. Bores tunnel themselves deep into tree trunks, lay eggs and initiate disease in the form of a plant fungus spreading throughout the organism until it dies. Then bores exit and re-enter the same tree or move onto another tree, repopulate and repeat their destruction cycle.

Treatment is essential to save known infected trees across Brea's public spaces and to protect others. The City Council considers this a serious problem and thus approved expenditures to try to control the bore. While it can be costly to ramp up and maintain an annual treatment program, it is estimated that loss of just what are known as affected trees could easily result in an expense of \$145,000 for replacements. This amount would only increase should disease be left to spread unabated. Should replacement trees be needed, growth could take approximately 10 years to match the maturity of those lost. Therefore, it is wise to take an aggressive stance and protect existing trees.