

# The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (*Euwallacea fornicatus*\*) and Fusarium dieback (*Fusarium euwallaceae*)

The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PHSB) is an ambrosia beetle native to Southeast Asia. In 2017 this pest was detected on London Plane trees in the KwaZulu-Natal National Botanical Gardens, Pietermaritzburg. Its presence has since been confirmed in multiple locations in eight provinces in South Africa. The beetle has a symbiotic relationship with the fungus *Fusarium euwallaceae*, which serves as a food source for the adults and their larvae. In susceptible trees the fungus causes a disease called Fusarium dieback, which can lead to dying branches and tree death. The beetles attack a wide range of exotic and indigenous trees in urban, agricultural and natural landscapes.



Above: An adult female is 1.8-2.6mm long. Males are smaller and cannot fly.



PHSB is not able to complete its life cycle on all the tree species it attacks. Trees in which the beetle is able to breed and multiply are referred to as '**reproductive host trees**'. Important reproductive hosts include species of oaks, maples, willows and coral trees, avocado and castor bean. '**Non-reproductive host trees**' are attacked by the beetle, but the beetles do not establish galleries (tunnels) or breed. The fungus may, or may not cause disease. Trees are generally not expected to die. An updated list of confirmed hosts in South Africa can be viewed at [www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pshb/](http://www.fabinet.up.ac.za/pshb/)

The movement of infested wood is an important means of spread of the beetle. Therefore, appropriate disposal of infested trees (by chipping/composting, solarization or burning) will be key to reducing the spread of this damaging pest. Surveys to monitor the spread of the beetle in South Africa are continuing. The public can assist by looking out for symptoms. Suspected instances can be reported to [pshb@fabi.up.ac.za](mailto:pshb@fabi.up.ac.za)

Left: Chinese maple tree killed by PHSB and its fungus



Reproductive galleries in pecan



PHSB galleries in coral tree



Shot gun-like symptoms on London Plane

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