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NEWS

For Immediate Release

August 20, 2013

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Colorado State Forest Service Monitoring for Walnut Tree Disease in Southeast Colorado

LA JUNTA, Colo. – The Colorado State Forest Service is in the process of monitoring the state’s black walnut trees for thousand cankers disease – a relatively new disease to the state that is lethal to infested trees. After being introduced to Colorado in recent years, the disease has already caused significant tree mortality in many of the state’s urban forests, primarily along the Front Range from Fort Collins to Pueblo.

As part of its monitoring efforts, CSFS foresters recently have been travelling through many communities in southeast Colorado to record the presence of black walnut trees and determine their current condition. Donna Davis, district forester for the CSFS La Junta District, says that she and other CSFS staff may be seen frequently cruising through neighborhoods in the coming weeks as they gather more information.

“Thousand cankers disease has already shown up in some parts of southeast Colorado, including Crowley and Otero counties,” said Davis. “We are locating black walnut trees in our communities and looking at the crowns for any signs of thousand cankers disease potential. These data will help identify general state-wide trends and enhance future monitoring efforts for our state.”

Thousand cankers disease is caused by a fungus carried by the very small walnut twig beetle. Once the fungus is introduced to a tree, it causes small dead areas in the bark called cankers. Trees are eventually killed by overwhelming attacks of walnut twig beetles and subsequent cankers that girdle branches.

Currently, there are no effective methods for saving trees with thousand cankers disease, and many states east of Colorado already have quarantines prohibiting the movement of walnut material.

Landowners with black walnut trees should inspect them regularly for symptoms including sparse foliage, leaf yellowing or wilting, branch dieback and excessive staining of the bark surface. Any suspect trees should be reported to the CSFS. All Colorado residents can help minimize the spread of this and other tree diseases by not moving potentially infested wood, including logs, firewood, lumber and wood chips.

For more information about thousand cankers disease, go to http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/113144_CSFS-1000Cankers_www.pdf.

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