



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

# Backyard Buddies

Your monthly guide to animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds

August 2017

## On the chopping block



Photo credit: Lee, Oakford WA

Lighting the fire to keep warm this winter? You might have noticed wood boring larvae whilst splitting your native timber fire wood.

Don't worry, despite the similar looking appearance of boring insect larvae, these are not the European house borer (EHB) and pose no risk to your home. They make great snacks for birds though!

Pictured in this article are the wood boring larvae of the native Eucalyptus longicorn beetle (aka longhorned beetle), *Phoracantha semipunctata*. The adult beetle lays eggs under bark or in cracks of host trees such as jarrah, *Eucalyptus marginata* and marri, *Corymbia calophylla*. The larvae hatch and bore into the tree and tunnel through the wood. Once large enough, they chew an escape tunnel to the wood surface, plug it up to

prevent predators entering and chew a larger chamber to pupate into an adult beetle. The beetle emerges by chewing through this plug.

The life cycle from egg to adult is poorly understood in south-western Australia but may be <1 year.



**Photo:** Lee, Oakford WA. Longicorn beetle larva in jarrah (2cm).



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If you've been chopping firewood for years but are only starting to see these borers, it's likely the trees your fire wood has been collected from are under increasing stress. Borers are secondary pests and drought stressed forests are highly susceptible to insect borer attack.

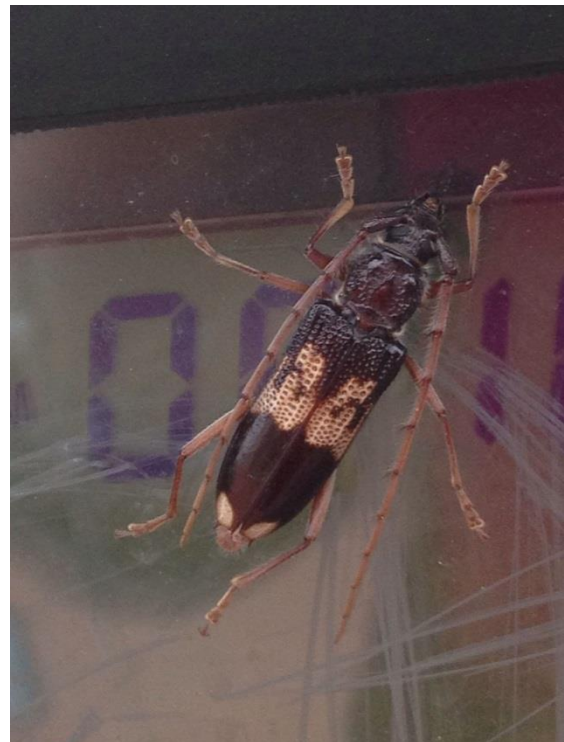
If you want to learn more about these native borers, browse the internet to find some great research papers through Murdoch University WA. If you want more information about EHB, visit [agric.wa.gov.au](http://agric.wa.gov.au) and search 'EHB'.



**Photo:** Matt, Mount Helena WA. Adult Eucalyptus longicorn beetle in pupal chamber.

You can also help protect your trees and our State forests by reporting unfamiliar or unusual pests, weeds or diseases to the

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Previously the Department of Agriculture and Food WA). Use our [MyPestGuide.agric.wa.gov.au](http://MyPestGuide.agric.wa.gov.au) website, free mobile app MyPestGuide Reporter or contact the Pest and Disease Information Service.



**Photo:** Rosalie, Clarkson train station WA. Adult Eucalyptus longicorn beetle crawling on ticket machine (2.5cm long).

Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS).  
[info@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@agric.wa.gov.au). 1800 084 881 3 Baron-Hay Court, South Perth WA 6151.