

HOT, HOT, HOT — ALL OVER AGAIN

For many around the state yesterday, the heat added another dimension to their work. At right, Eddie Cardoso, manager of ScrubaDub Auto Wash in Natick, soaped up a car before it headed into the car wash; later he handed out popsicles to his overheated employees. Below left, at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Khalid Alif, an employee at the Doghouse hot dog stand, said he sold only six hot dogs during his shift, but a lot of water and lemonade. At bottom right, landscaper Renato Aguiar, who works for Babin Landscaping, gave the finishing touches to a lawn in Stow.



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‘Around the Fourth of July holiday is when they start to emerge. We would have had beetles emerging from those trees all week long here, which would have caused more damage.’

CLINT MCFARLAND
Director of the US Department of Agriculture's beetle eradication program

Surveyors broaden search for beetle

No insects found, but work portends huge hunt in area

By Patrick G. Lee
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

A crew of 11 scoured about 100 trees around Faulkner Hospital for signs of Asian long-horned beetles yesterday, a day after officials announced the discovery of the invasive pest in six trees on the hospital's grounds.

No additional beetles were found yesterday. Working 12-hour days, the workers have checked more than 600 trees since the search started Monday, but that's just a fraction of what lies ahead.

Upward of 100,000 trees will have to be examined in a zone centered on Faulkner Hospital that spans 10 square miles in Boston and Brookline, said Clint McFarland, director of the US Department of Agriculture's beetle eradication program. The target area includes the Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, and Jamaica Pond.

He said it is particularly urgent that tree-climbers and ground surveyors work as long as daylight hours permit in the next few weeks to beat the beetles that are just now starting to burrow their way out of trees.

“Around the Fourth of July holiday is when they start to emerge,” McFarland said. “We would have had beetles emerging from those trees all week long here, which would have caused more damage.”

The six trees removed Tuesday morning contained 10 adult beetles ready to exit in a matter of hours, he said.

So far, five tree-climbers have been devoted to working around the hospital site, along with six ground surveyors.

The USDA is hoping to soon hire 40 more tree climbers, who would be evenly split between Jamaica Plain and Worcester, where beetles were discovered two years ago.

From the ground yesterday, surveyors scanned trees with binoculars. They wrapped orange or pink ribbons around three trees on the grounds of the Italian Home for Children, marking them as possible hosts of the insect.

Tree-climbers later verified that the trees were healthy. But by then the sight of the brightly-colored bands tied around trees had caused concern.

“I was just walking up the driveway and I saw the two ribbons, and I knew instantly and my heart sank,” said Denise LaScaleia, facilities director for the Italian Home, which is next to the hospital.

This week marks the beginning of a yearslong process as the Department of Agriculture attempts to track down beetles that might have spread beyond hospital grounds.

The Asian longhorned beetle, which thrives on maples and other hardwoods, has no predators in this country, so any infested tree must be destroyed to prevent a devastating outbreak.

Ground teams will start a thorough sweep of the Arnold Arboretum today, and nearby residents can expect to see tree-climbing teams by the end of the week, officials said.

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‘We’re getting slammed, absolutely slammed. People get nasty when there’s no air conditioning.’

SCOTT ANDERSON, Ellsworth Supply

With business so hot, AC repairman keeps his cool

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buying AC units up at Home Depot yesterday. It's the same last-minute thing; why does everybody wait this long?”

Although temperatures yesterday did not reach the predicted high of 89 degrees, it felt even hotter with the humidity, Charlie Foley, National Weather Service meteorologist.

The week's hottest weather in Boston topped out Tuesday at 100 degrees. Yesterday, in inland areas of the state, beyond the reach of a cooling sea breeze, the mercury climbed to the mid- to upper-90s.

“Today is the last of the high temperatures, but the humidity will still continue,” Foley said yesterday. “It will drop from the oppressive to the occasionally uncomfortable.”

The heat sent residents throughout Greater Boston seek-

ing comfort at beaches, ice cream shops, movie theaters, libraries, and even work. And for the folks who sell and install air conditioners, business is booming.

Yesterday, Wood personally responded to three air conditioner repair calls. Today, his team is scheduled for more.

“We’re getting slammed, absolutely slammed,” said Scott Anderson, a salesman at Ellsworth Supply, the Dorchester warehouse where Wood gets parts. “People get nasty when there’s no air conditioning, more so than when there’s no heat. They have less patience for it; they just want it fixed.”

Wood’s company, a small business he started two years ago that offers plumbing, heating, and cooling services, only has three trucks. After the 100 degrees recorded on Tuesday at Logan International Airport,

Wood said, if he had 100 trucks, they would all be busy.

That’s because customers like Helen Ouyang, 30, have reached their breaking point.

“It was just too hot; I couldn’t take it anymore,” Ouyang said, explaining she stayed at a hotel on Tuesday night to escape the suffocating heat.

Ouyang’s air system, a ductless minisplit unit, has been malfunctioning for almost three years, she said. She has tried to have it fixed before, but nothing has worked.

Wood spent more than two hours taking apart Ouyang’s air conditioner, climbing up and down from the roof and running tests to determine what the problem was.

Like any man trying to save the day, Wood has a utility belt.

As he examines each air-conditioning unit, he pulls out mirrors, gauges, wrenches, and oth-

er tools from his belt, one at a time. Figuring out what’s wrong with an air conditioner, Wood said, can be like detective work.

“Air conditioners can be very temperamental. There are lots of variables,” he said.

Even when Wood figures it out, that’s sometimes only half the battle. Ouyang’s unit, for example, could not be fixed in one visit, Wood said.

Other customers, like Alex Jones, 25, were also out of luck.

Jones, who moved into his Quincy apartment about a month ago, said his air-conditioning unit blows hot air. So he called Wood.

“I’ve been eating on the roof deck and taking cold showers,” Jones said.

After examining Jones’s rooftop unit, Wood determined it was too old to repair: The air conditioner was installed when the building was built, in 1972.

“I hate telling people, ‘We can’t fix this today,’” Wood said later. “I get this feeling like I’m about to tell my dad I crashed his car into something.”

Wood, despite his demeanor and profession, said he hates the heat, so he empathizes with his customers. He knows the kind of cool comfort air conditioning provides. While driving in his van, Wood cranks the air up, acknowledging he couldn’t live without it.

So, why climb ladders and work atop roofs in the blazing sun?

“There’s a direct cause-and-effect result and reward kind of thing,” Wood said. “When you go into a call, something is broken; when you leave, it’s fixed.

“It’s not easy, but it’s so rewarding. That’s why you do it.”

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Dry weather spurs restrictions on region’s water use

► WATER
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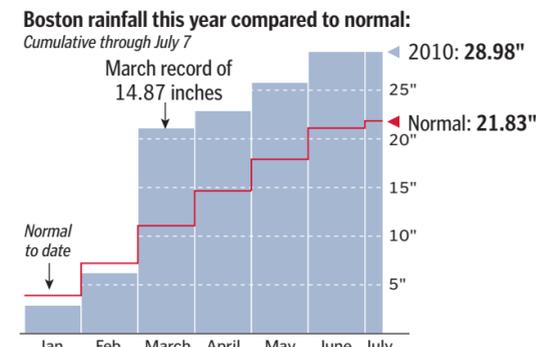
on other sources are being forced to crack down, especially as this week’s searing heat caused a dramatic jump in water consumption.

“We’ve had all sources running, and we’re still losing ground,” said Eric Carty, water manager for Hopkinton, which banned lawn watering Tuesday night after three days of surging demand. “It’s been almost a month since we’ve had any measurable rain. We went right from floods to drought.”

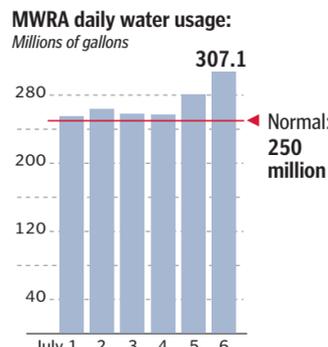
After the relentless rains of March, the prospect of water shortages seems like a cruel joke. But since the floods receded, the Boston area has experienced below-average rainfall, receiving less rain in April, May, and June combined than it did in March. It has not rained so far in July, and water officials who not long ago were worried about overflowing rivers and breached dams are suddenly anxious about having enough water to last the long summer ahead.

“We went from one extreme to the other,” Carty said.

North of Boston, in Chelmsford, where less than 2 inches of rain fell in June, officials on Tuesday announced tougher water restrictions through the summer, worried that dwindling supplies



SOURCES: Department of Conservation and Recreation; National Weather Service; MWRA



DAVID SCHUTZ/GLOBE STAFF

would not be enough to see them through more dry, hot weather.

“We currently have about 10 million gallons [of water] in reserve,” said Robert J. Delaney, superintendent of the town’s water district. “That’s not enough to get you by.”

ONLINE

See a video on towns’ water limits in a video on boston.com.

The restrictions are renewing an age-old battle between conservation efforts and the suburban love affair with lush green lawns, but water officials warn that they mean business. Since many homeowners set sprinkler timers to the early morning hours, Aquarion crews will be canvass-

ing Aquarion’s South Shore towns before dawn to enforce the ban. First-time offenders get a warning, but repeat violators could have their water service turned off and be required to pay a fee to have it turned on again, Hibbard said.

“We can’t mess around,” he said. “This is about public safety. The lawns will grow back.”

Outdoor watering in those communities is allowed every other day between 6 and 9 p.m., but only by hand.

The heat wave, arriving while many people were on vacation over the holiday weekend, has also intensified demand, water officials said.

“They got back after the Fourth and have been sprinkling

ever since,” said Robert Eiben, general manager of the water district for Dedham and Westwood, which on Tuesday limited lawn watering to twice a week for its 38,000 customers. “We can’t handle everyone watering their lawn at once.”

MWRA officials said they have been taken aback by the level of demand in communities it serves, where consumption climbed from 256 million gallons on Sunday to 307 million Tuesday.

“That was the highest we’ve seen in probably six years,” said Ria Convery, a spokeswoman for the agency, which provides water to much of Greater Boston. “But we were really helped by the March storms, and to be 96 per-

cent full in July is a good position to be in.”

But in towns that rely on local reservoirs and wells, supplies have become more precarious.

“It’s just been real dry, and people really used the water over the July 4 weekend,” said Matthew Pearson, who manages the water district in Grafton and is considering a full outdoor watering ban.

Plymouth, which has already limited outdoor watering, is also considering tougher measures. “We’re having trouble keeping up,” said Paul Wohler, the town’s utilities superintendent. “Every day in July has been more than the day before.”

Wohler is closely monitoring weather forecasts and takes hope in predictions of weekend thunderstorms. But many say the public will need to come to terms with conservation measures designed to protect watersheds and the ecosystems they sustain.

“People have to learn it won’t be a dust bowl if they don’t water their lawn seven days a week,” said Duane LeVangie, water management program chief for the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Globe correspondent June Wu contributed to this report. Peter Schworm can be reached at pschworm@globe.com.