



Halting the ALB: Public Outreach

Public outreach and public education are integral components of the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) Cooperative Eradication Program's safeguarding efforts. The outreach effort focuses on increasing awareness about the ALB in Illinois, New Jersey, New York—and ultimately throughout the United States. Outreach efforts are designed to encourage the involvement, support, and cooperation of targeted audiences in eradicating current ALB infestations in the United States and preventing future infestations from taking hold.

The goals of the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program's public outreach efforts are to: gain citizen support in reporting any suspected ALB; to uncover pockets of ALB infestation in known quarantine areas; and to advise the public that ALB program officials must access private property to survey and treat host trees for ALB. An additional component urges citizens not to take firewood, lumber, and other woody debris out of quarantined areas in order to limit the pest's spread.

Those that are living, working, and traveling in areas quarantined to reduce the spread of ALB are prime candidates for ALB Program outreach activities. The ALB Program and its cooperators reach out to homeowners and residents, nursery businesses, landscapers, those who cut and haul wood and wood products, school children, and adults. The program shares information with municipalities, special interest groups, city agencies, and elected officials.

Outreach activities take a variety of forms. For example, a service-learning based curriculum on the ALB was developed for the Illinois Cooperative Eradication Program and first used in Chicago schools in 2006. The "Beetle Busters" school curriculum builds upon a 2005 effort that saw summer campers engaged in searching for any signs of the ALB and reporting the results of those searches.

The more traditional outreach and educational efforts include press events, publications, advertisements in newspapers, Public Service Announcements on radio and television, community meetings, and training sessions with contractors and green industry professionals. One of the most visible outreach activities involves tabletop displays, which are staffed by ALB program experts who are able to share information and educational materials with visitors at countless venues.

New infestations of the ALB have been uncovered by alert residents that spotted an insect they found suspicious; therefore, it is critical that the ALB Program reach diverse audiences so that everyone knows to be on the lookout for the ALB. Printed materials are available in a variety of languages, while newspaper and web-based advertising is selected specifically to reach diverse communities.

The ALB Cooperative Eradication Program ensures that public outreach efforts are comprehensive, inclusive, and creative.

ALB outreach activities are delivered by the USDA ALB Cooperative Eradication Program employees and the program's cooperating agencies. Cooperators include civic organizations and local, state, and federal government representatives that work with USDA APHIS to eradicate ALB in the United States.