



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA Urges the Public to Report Asian Longhorned Beetle Sightings

WASHINGTON, July 30, 2012--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is asking the public to be on the lookout for the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB). August is a time of peak emergence for the devastating invasive pest and a critical time for building the public's awareness of ALB.

ALB was first discovered in the United States in 1996, likely arriving in wood packing material from Asia. The beetle is an invasive insect that feeds on 13 different genera of hardwoods trees, eventually killing them. Maple, willow, elm, horsechestnut and birch are the host trees most preferred by the ALB. Since 1996, the pest has infested trees in Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Ohio, resulting in the removal of more than 80,000 host trees. It threatens recreational areas, forests, and suburban and urban shade trees. Important American industries such as timber, nursery stock, maple syrup production, and tourism—industries that support millions of American jobs and pump billions of dollars into our nation's economy—are at risk.

“The public is our first line of defense because early detection is crucial and could mean more trees saved,” said Rebecca Blue, Deputy Under Secretary of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). “Whether you're camping, fishing, hiking, or just relaxing in the backyard, be on the lookout for Asian longhorned beetles and signs of their damage. Please inspect your trees at home regularly, and be aware of the risks of transporting forests pests when moving firewood.”

USDA is focused on working closely with federal partners, states, communities and the public to combat the pest. Eradication has been declared in Chicago, Illinois, Hudson County, New Jersey and Islip, New York. The partnership continues with eradication efforts in Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York.

Adult beetles are most active during the summer and early fall. They can be seen on trees, branches, walls, outdoor furniture, cars, and sidewalks and caught in pool filters. With these unique characteristics, the beetle can be easy to see:

- 1 to 1 ½ inches in length
- Long antennae banded in black and white (longer than the insect's body)
- Shiny, jet black body with random white spots

- Six legs
- Legs may appear bluish in color

In addition to looking for the beetle, you can search for signs of infestation, including:

- Dime-sized (1/4" or larger), perfectly round exit holes in the tree
- Oval depressions on the bark where the eggs are laid
- Sawdust-like materials, called frass, on the ground and the branches
- Sap seeping from wounds in the tree

Help stop the Asian longhorned beetle's destruction by inspecting your trees and report any signs or symptoms of an infestation immediately. If you find a beetle, you can help to stop the spread by capturing it, placing the insect in a jar and freezing it. This will preserve the insect for identification. To report a sighting or gain additional information, visit www.BeetleBusters.info or call the toll free hotline at 1-866-702-9938.

For information about the beetle and program activities, please contact your local ALB Cooperative Eradication Program at www.aphis.usda.gov.

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