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# News Release

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## **MANHATTAN AND STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. DECLARED FREE OF THE ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE**

WASHINGTON, May 14, 2013 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and Staten Island are free from the invasive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB). USDA remains focused on carrying out its mission, despite a time of significant budget uncertainty.

“The mission to eradicate this destructive beetle, combined with various levels of cooperation, has resulted in success,” states Rebecca Bech, APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Deputy Administrator. “However, while the eradications of these areas are a victory for APHIS, our partners and the State of New York, we still need residents to stay vigilant and inspect their trees regularly for signs of infestation.”

The eradication of ALB in Manhattan and Staten Island reduces the regulated areas of New York from 135 to 109 square miles. ALB quarantines remain in effect for the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, as well as an area in central Long Island.

APHIS and its cooperators undertake eradication by imposing quarantines, conducting regulatory inspections, surveying host trees by using both ground and aerial survey methods, removing infested and high-risk host trees, and chemically treating host trees – all are part of an area-wide integrated eradication strategy.

The beetle was first discovered in Manhattan in August 1999. Eradication efforts involved the removal of 130 trees. In Staten Island, the beetle was first discovered in March 2007. Eradication efforts involved the removal of 10,325. Both areas received chemical treatment applications of host trees.

The New York City boroughs of Manhattan and Staten Island are the second and third areas in the state to declare eradication from the insect. The beetle was successfully eradicated from Islip, N.Y on Long Island in 2011.

This past March, the eradication of the beetle from New Jersey was announced. New Jersey is the second state to win the fight against the pest. Illinois declared eradication in 2008. An area is declared free of ALB after all the infested trees are eliminated and surveys are negative for active signs of beetle activity or the presence of the beetle.

The Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) was first discovered in the U.S. in 1996, likely arriving unknowingly inside wood packing material from Asia. The insect has no known natural predators and it threatens recreational areas, forests, and suburban and urban shade trees.

The beetle bores through the tissues that carry water and nutrients throughout the tree, which causes the tree to starve, weaken and eventually die. Once a tree is infested, it must be removed. The invasive pest has caused the loss of over 80,000 trees in New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, New Jersey and Illinois.

Members of the public are encouraged to inspect their trees for signs of damage caused by the insect and report any suspicious findings. The sooner an infestation is reported, the sooner efforts can be made to quickly contain and isolate an area from future destruction. People are encouraged to be mindful of moving firewood, as moving ALB-infested firewood can unintentionally spread of the pest. For more information, please visit [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) or [www.asianlonghornedbeetle.com](http://www.asianlonghornedbeetle.com).

The ALB cooperative eradication program in New York is comprised of USDA APHIS, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as USDA implements sequestration – the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act. USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$828 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.

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