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News Release

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USDA DECLARES A BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS AREA FREE OF THE ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

WASHINGTON, May 12, 2014 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) has been effectively eradicated from an area in Boston, Mass.

“The mission to eliminate this destructive beetle in Boston, combined with various levels of cooperation, has resulted in success,” states Osama El-Lissy, APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Deputy Administrator. “However, while the eradication of this infestation is a victory for all of us, we ask that residents of Massachusetts stay vigilant in inspecting their trees regularly for signs of the beetle.”

The beetle was discovered in Boston in July 2010. To control the pest, 10-square miles were regulated in Norfolk and Suffolk Counties; an area that included the neighborhoods of Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, Roxbury, West Roxbury, and a portion of the Town of Brookline.

This past March, final inspection surveys of host trees confirmed the eradication of the beetle from the area. At just under four years, this confirmation marks the shortest eradication timeframe in the history of APHIS' National ALB Eradication. The short time taken to eradicate the pest is a testament to early detection lessening the impact to an affected community.

APHIS and its partners removed six infested trees from one property and conducted multiple inspection surveys of more than 90,000 host trees. In May 2013, the eradication program completed its third and final cycle of chemical treatment applications on 2,000 host trees.

The eradication of ALB in Boston reduces the regulated areas in Massachusetts from 120 to 110 square miles. An ALB quarantine remains in effect in central Massachusetts, which includes the City of Worcester, the towns of West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and portions of Holden and Auburn.

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

The Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) was first discovered in the United States in 1996 in Brooklyn, N.Y., 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 110,000 trees in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Illinois and New Jersey.

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 the pest. For more information or to report, please visit the APHIS [Asian Longhorned Beetle](#) webpage or www.asianlonghornedbeetle.com, or call 1-866-702-9938 to be forwarded to your State Plant Health Director's office.

APHIS' eradication partners in Massachusetts include USDA's U.S. Forest Service, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the City of Worcester, the towns of Holden, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and Auburn, the City of Boston, and the Town of Brookline.

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