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USDA APHIS Announces Plans for Eradicating Asian Longhorned Beetle in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina

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Press Release

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WASHINGTON, June 6, 2024 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing its plans for eliminating ALB from Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina in 2024.

“We need people looking for and reporting tree damage now more than ever,” said Josie Ryan, APHIS’ National Operations Manager for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program. “Please look at your trees and report any suspicious damage. You can help us find the beetle so we can eliminate it.”

APHIS and its partners are inspecting trees in quarantined areas in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina. The program removes infested trees at no cost to property owners. And they will not use insecticide treatments on residential properties this year. They will continue to respond to calls for assistance and provide outreach.

APHIS continues its work developing new ways to eradicate the beetle. These include:

- Using a new dynamic approach to surveying to reduce the time spent re-inspecting trees that are low risk of becoming infested.
- Conducting an infested-tree removal study in wetland environments.
- Using risk-based models to project the beetle’s spread and plan survey efforts.
- Evaluating new tools to find the beetle sooner, such as using trained dogs and remote-controlled technology to help find tree damage or host trees.
- Conducting studies to understand when and under what conditions adult beetles emerge.
- Improving data collection methods in each state.

As a reminder, people living and working in quarantine zones may not move regulated items out of the area. This includes items such as firewood, nursery stock, woody debris, and green lumber from all ALB host trees, unless the person has a compliance agreement along with a permit, or certificate. The trees the beetle attacks are regulated. This includes maple, elm, willow, birch, poplar, buckeye / horsechestnut, ash, sycamore, mimosa, goldenrain tree, katsura, and mountain ash.

Program officials track wood movement inside and around each infested area. They conduct training sessions for compliance agreement holders. Individuals and businesses may receive fines if they do not follow the regulations. A business or person can enter into a compliance agreement with the program if they want to move regulated items out of the quarantine. Doing this will get them the needed permit or certificate for those items. Or they can request that program staff inspect the items and issue the permit or certificate. To register for free compliance training, please call your local office:

- In Massachusetts, call 508-852-8110.
- In New York, call 631-962-0243.
- In Ohio, call 513-381-7180.
- In South Carolina, call 843-973-8329.

People who live in an ALB-quarantined area can help by:

1. Allowing program officials property access to inspect trees and remove any infested trees.
2. Hiring companies that have compliance agreements with the program.
3. Contacting the program or municipality to learn how to dispose of or move yard waste.
4. Contacting the program if you have any tree materials that might have ALB.
5. Buying or gathering firewood where you will burn it. Or use certified heat-treated firewood.

Currently, 278.3 square miles are under federal quarantine for ALB in the United States: 110 square miles in Worcester County, Massachusetts; 42.9 square miles in central Long Island, New York; 49 square miles in Clermont County, Ohio; and 76.4 square miles in Charleston and Dorchester counties, South Carolina. For more information about ALB and program activities, please call 1-866-702-9938 or visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/alb>.

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APHIS protects the health of U.S. agriculture and natural resources against invasive pests and diseases, regulates genetically engineered crops, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and helps people and wildlife coexist. We also certify the health of U.S. agricultural exports and resolve phytosanitary and sanitary issues to open, expand, and maintain markets for U.S. plant and animal products.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.