



NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry
271 Mast Rd, Durham NH 03824



Phone: 603-868-7600; Fax: 603-868-7604; Web Site: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/>

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Contact: Glenn Rosenholm

phone (603) 868-7686

E-mail: grosenholm@fs.fed.us

U.S. Forest Service asks Northeast maple syrup producers to report signs of Asian longhorned beetle

DURHAM, N.H.—The U.S. Forest Service is asking maple syrup producers to keep an eye out for signs of the dreaded Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) during their tree tapping operations.

ALB (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is a highly destructive invasive insect that infests more than a dozen North American hardwood tree species, including maples, birches, elms and willows. Maples range widely across Eastern North America and are considered highly attractive hosts for the insect.

"ALB poses a great peril to New England's hardwood forests," said Forest Service Forest Health Group Leader Mike Bohne. "Left unchecked, this pest has potential to wreak havoc not only on forests themselves, but also on the industries that depend upon healthy forests for their livelihood." Maple syrup production would be especially harmed.

Each year many thousands of maple syrup producers traverse their woods to tap their maple trees. The sticky sap yielded from the trees is then boiled down to produce maple syrup, a sought after delicacy.

Bohne said maple syrup producers can help spot signs of ALB while tapping maple trees for their sap. While the inch-long black and white ALB adult insects will not emerge for another three to four months, their dime-sized egg sites and exit holes might be spotted higher up in the tree canopy or on the trunk.

Maple syrup producers should pay special attention to trees damaged in the recent ice storm. Branches that fell to the ground during the December 2008 storm could exhibit signs of ALB and offer a rare close-up look into the tree canopy.

The ALB chews the outer bark of the tree to lay their eggs. Larval feeding inside the tree can affect the normal flow of nutrients and the tree's structural integrity. Adult beetles usually begin emerging from trees in late June and early July.

The voracious bug is a native of China and Korea. It is currently found in parts of New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Another ALB infestation detected in and around Chicago in recent years was declared eradicated in April 2008. In Canada, officials are also dealing with a separate ALB infestation in Toronto.

A major ALB infestation was discovered in Worcester, Mass., in August 2008. Since then, more than 18,000 infested trees and host trees have been cut down in an

attempt to eradicate the beetle. The eradication program has cost \$24.5 million to date.

Wooden shipping material appears the likely source of the introductions to the United States, said Bohne. Now that the invasive insect is here there is a greater risk of spread by people moving infested firewood long distances. Infestations generally spread very slowly naturally.

"There is serious concern that infested firewood was moved from Worcester into New England's hardwood forests before the infestation was detected and regulated," Bohne said.

Areas where ALB is known to exist are now regulated for the movement of firewood and other woody material. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) serves as the lead federal regulatory agency in the federal and state cooperative effort.

Clint McFarland, Federal Program Director for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program in Massachusetts, emphasized the need for citizen awareness in the fight against ALB.

"If you look at all the ALB infestations in North America, including Canada, they were all found by private citizens," McFarland said.

Citizens are also reminded to not move wood outside the regulated area. The current ALB regulated area in Massachusetts can be viewed at:
<http://www.massnrc.org/pests/alb/>

People who suspect they might have an ALB infestation should call the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program toll-free at 866-702-9938.

On the Net: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/palerts/alb/alb_pa.pdf
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