

Battling Beetles in Chicago

The Challenge

In 1998 several infestations of Asian longhorned beetle were discovered in the Chicago Metropolitan area. The Asian longhorned beetle is a non-native pest that poses an enormous threat to our urban and rural forests. Previously found in the New York City area, the beetle enters the United States in solid wood packing material from China. The beetle kills primarily maple, elm, and willow trees. Since the beetle has no known predators in the United States, cooperating agencies need to work quickly and effectively to eradicate the beetle and protect the forest resource.

The Solution

Northeastern Area's Forest Health Protection and Urban and Community Forestry staff assisted Chicago with eradication of the beetle and replanting of trees. Specifically, the Area:

- Participated on the interagency response team comprised of the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, DuPage County, and the City of Chicago.
- Coordinated with New York City agencies and experts on how to approach the eradication and reforestation of Chicago.
- Provided staff for ground and bucket-truck surveys.
- **Trained and coordinated off-season USDA Forest Service smokejumpers to climb trees and survey for Asian longhorned beetle.**
- **Created and distributed informational materials on the Asian longhorned beetle.**
- Provided technical and financial assistance for **planting non-host trees** in the affected neighborhoods.



Chicago's treasured urban forest.

Resulting Benefits

Ongoing surveys indicate that this may be **one of the best examples of eradication of an invasive exotic pest** within the United States.

- Cooperation between local and federal government, the media, and neighborhood residents was critical to the eradication efforts. The media, especially the **Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune**, played a critical role by informing residents and reporting information quickly.
- The Northeastern Area piloted the tree climbing detection crews in Chicago, and it is now the **preferred method for beetle detection.**
- Infested trees have been removed and replaced with younger, healthier, non-susceptible trees. **More trees have been planted than were removed.**

Sharing Success

- The Northeastern Area developed presentations, publications, and newsletter articles to raise awareness about Asian longhorned beetle and to share the success in Chicago with others.
- The Northeastern Area assisted in the development of several television news programs and even a PBS special on the Asian longhorned beetle.

*For additional information on the Asian longhorned beetle, visit our website at:
<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/alb/>*



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