

Check your trees

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced that August is Tree Check Month and urges the public to check trees for signs of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB).

"August is a time of peak emergence for the beetle and is most likely when members of the public will see an adult beetle infesting trees," states Scott Pfister, Director for USDA APHIS' Pest Management Division. "We're asking people to take 10 minutes and check your trees for the beetle and any signs of damage it causes."

Checking trees on your property or in your neighborhood means looking at the host trees the beetle attacks for the beetle itself or signs of damage caused by it. The most concerning signs are perfectly round dime-sized exit holes, found on the trunk and branches. You can look for round or oval shallow scars in the bark where the females chew oviposition (egg-laying) sites, and also for frass (excrement), a sawdust-like material, on the ground at the base of the tree or at the crotches of branches. Dead branches or canopy dieback can indicate something is wrong. Finally, look for the beetle itself on the tree trunk, branches, on the ground, and on nearby surfaces. With these unique characteristics, the beetle stands out from other insects:

- Body is 1 to 1 ½ inches in length
- Long antennae banded in black and white (longer than the insect's body)
- Shiny, jet black body with random white spots

The most important thing you can do to protect your trees is to check them regularly and encourage others to do so too. Early detection is crucial in the fight against this invasive pest. It can mean the difference between the six infested trees lost in Boston vs. over 30,000 trees lost in Worcester County, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, once ALB infests a tree, there is no cure for that tree, but there are things we can do to save the rest.

USDA works closely with federal partners, states, communities and the public to combat the pest in areas where infested trees have already been found. While eradication has been declared in Illinois (2008), New Jersey (2013) and Islip, New York (2011), the eradication efforts continue in Ohio, Massachusetts, and New York. We all still need to stay vigilant and inspect trees regularly for signs of infestation, especially since trees in all states are at risk.

The beetle was first discovered in the United States in 1996, likely arriving in wood packing material from Asia. It is an invasive insect that feeds on 13

different genera of hardwoods trees eventually killing them. Maple, willow, elm, horse chestnut and birch are the host trees most preferred by the pest. Infestations have been found in New York (1996), Illinois (1998), New Jersey (2002), Massachusetts (2008) and Ohio (2011), resulting in the removal of more than 85,000 host trees. It threatens recreational areas, forests, and suburban and urban shade trees. Important American industries such as timber, nursery stock, maple syrup production, and tourism are also at risk.

Pictures, symptoms, and a list of preferred trees can be found here:

<http://asianlonghornedbeetle.com/>

Help stop the Asian longhorned beetle's destruction by checking your trees and report any signs or symptoms of an infestation immediately. If you find a beetle, try to take a picture or capture it by placing the insect in a jar and freezing it. This will help with identification. To report a sighting or for more information, contact the Purdue Extension Service.

Note courtesy of Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator