



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA TREATS NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY TREES AGAINST ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

WASHINGTON, March 28, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is treating 77,688 trees susceptible to the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) with the insecticide imidacloprid in New York and New Jersey this spring.

Treatments will start on March 27 on Staten Island and Queens. Treatments in Carteret, Linden and Roselle, New Jersey will begin on April 21. Treatments in Brooklyn, New York will begin on April 18 and continue into late June. Program officials, through the use of contracted certified pesticide applicators, will treat Asian longhorned beetle host trees primarily by injecting insecticides in the soil around the base of trees, or by trunk injection using hand-held application devices. Mauget capsules inserted into tree trunks to deliver insecticide over time will be used in parts of New Jersey. USDA will monitor treatment applications.

Regardless of the treatment application, the imidacloprid is dispersed through the tree's vascular system. This enables the insecticide to reach Asian longhorned beetle adults feeding on small twigs and leaves and any larvae feeding just beneath the bark of host trees. Imidacloprid is currently used in the lawn care industry to kill lawn grubs and in some domestic pet treatments to kill fleas.

In the 132-square mile New York quarantine, USDA will treat a total of 47,640 trees, including 34,441 trees in Brooklyn and 13,199 trees in Queens.

USDA will treat 30,048 trees in a 32.8 square mile quarantine area in New Jersey and Staten Island. This includes parts of Staten Island (7.8 square miles) as well as Middlesex and Union counties in New Jersey (25 square miles). USDA will treat 231 trees in Carteret, 10,301 trees in Linden, and 1,271 trees in Roselle as well as 18,245 trees on Staten Island, New York.

Potentially, the Asian longhorned beetle is one of the most destructive and costly invasive species to enter the United States. These insects threaten urban and suburban shade trees and recreational and forest resources valued at hundreds of billions of dollars. The Asian longhorned beetle also might impact such industries as maple syrup production, hardwood lumber processing, nurseries and tourism. If these insects became widely established, the impact would be felt in urban, suburban and forested parts of the country. Treatments are part of the Asian longhorned beetle cooperative eradication program's effort to prevent further infestation of this invasive insect and reduce beetle populations.

The larvae of the Asian longhorned beetle bore into healthy hardwood trees and feed on living tree tissue and heartwood. Later, throughout the summer, adult beetles emerge from exit holes and briefly feed on the leaves and small twigs of host trees.

Adult Asian longhorned beetle, which are about 1 to 1.5 inches long, have a shiny jet black body with distinctive white spots and long antennae that are banded in black and white. The insect was first found in New York in 1996. Subsequent infestations in New Jersey were discovered in 2002 and 2004.

APHIS and its cooperators undertake eradication by imposing quarantines, conducting visual inspections around confirmed sites to determine the scope of infestations, removing infested and high-risk exposed trees and chemically treating host trees as part of an areawide integrated pest eradication strategy. The goal is to eliminate this destructive insect from New York City, Long Island and New Jersey before it can establish itself elsewhere.

The public can assist the eradication effort by allowing program officials access to their property to evaluate susceptible trees for any signs of Asian longhorned beetle infestation and/or to treat trees that are susceptible to Asian longhorned beetle infestation.

The Asian longhorned beetle Eradication Program is a cooperative effort among various federal, state and local agencies including, USDA's APHIS, Forest Service and Agricultural Research Service; the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Department of Environmental Conservation; the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Protection and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

For more information on the treatment program, call in New York 1-866-265-0301 or 877-STOP-ALB and in New Jersey call (732) 815-4700 or 866-233-8531. For more information about the Asian longhorned beetle Cooperative Eradication Program call or visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/ALB.

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