

News from the

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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More Asian Longhorned Beetles Found in Carteret, Rahway border *Tree Climbers, Other Experts Fan Out Through Area*

(TRENTON) – Additional infestations of Asian longhorned beetles were found in Carteret and along the borough's border with Rahway today by a team of experts searching to determine the extent of the beetle's presence in the area.

Numerous trees in a wooded area along Blair Road near a commercial zone on the Carteret-Rahway border were found to be infested with both adult beetles and eggs. In addition, a second tree in Carteret was found to be infested. The first, in a residential area of Elm Street in the borough, was found on August 2.

The second infested Carteret tree, on a residential area of Dalpert Street near a county park, was discovered this afternoon, as tree climbers, surveyors and other specialists began their first day of visiting properties and inspecting trees within a one-mile radius of where a beetle and an infested tree were found on August 2. The second infested tree is about one mile from the first, on the outer edge of the quarantine zone established to keep firewood and other wood trimmings from being moved out of the area.

New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus said finding the new infestations underscored the need for the team to investigate all trees within the quarantine zone to halt the beetle's spread.

"This is an invasive pest and it is not welcomed in any community in New Jersey," said Secretary Kuperus.

Experts looking for the beetle moved from the Dalpert Street site to a nearby wooded area in Rahway and found several trees infested there with adult beetles, said Paul Kurtz, the NJDA's coordinator of the search effort.

Earlier today, Secretary Kuperus and members of the search team outlined for the media the work that will be done to locate and eradicate the beetle. The Secretary said the effort was an example of cooperation among the Department, the USDA and local officials, and urged residents to help the experts do their jobs.

"One thing that is very important in the effort to eradicate this pest is cooperation," said Secretary Kuperus. "The town has been very, very cooperative, giving us access to the Mayor's office, the Mayor has been sending out letters. This really is a cooperative effort of the municipality, the county, the Legislative leaders in this area, the state, NJDA and USDA. We're hoping this is a small infestation, but we won't know until we go through the process."

The beetle, native to China and North Korea, can wreak havoc on hardwood trees such as maples, chestnuts, birches and elms. The female bores into the bark to lay her eggs. Once hatched, the grub-like young burrow deeper into the tree until finally reaching the woody tissue. The beetles colonize the tree until it is killed from the inside out.

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Asian longhorned beetles have caused serious tree losses in New York State and Chicago, but have been found attacking trees only once before in New Jersey. In October 2002, an area within 1½ miles of a 9-acre site in Jersey City was quarantined to prevent the spread of the insect. More than 100 infested trees at that site were removed to eliminate the beetle.

Barry Emens, director of the USDA's efforts to eradicate the beetle in New Jersey, said residents like the one who found the first Carteret beetle will be important in the coming months and years as the effort continues to ensure the beetle does not spread.

"It's people like that homeowner that we need more of," said Emens. "There are only so many of us, but the public has many, many eyes."

Diane Leonard, a USDA tree-mapping specialist, said residents might notice small orange dots painted on trees that have been examined by tree-climbers. That dot simply indicates the tree has been inspected, and should not be seen as a sign of infestation or that the tree will have to be removed.

Restrictions on the movement of firewood, tree trimmings and nursery products have been instituted in a one-mile radius around the property where the beetle was found. Tree services in the area have been contacted by the search team and informed of the specific handling of wood products from any tree trimmed or cut down within the quarantine zone.

Asian longhorned beetles are about 1 to 1.5 inches long and have a shiny black exterior with white spots. Their name comes from their long antennae, which are banded black and white. The beetles typically attack one tree, and migrate to others when their populations become too dense.

Signs of Asian longhorned beetle infestation include:

- Large round holes anywhere on the tree, including branches, trunk and exposed roots
- Oval or rounded, darkened wounds in the bark
- Large piles of coarse sawdust around the base of trees or where branches meet the main stem

Anyone suspecting the presence of this beetle should contact the NJDA at 1-866-BEETLE-1 or (609) 292-5440. For more information, visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov and click on Asian longhorned beetle under "Hot Issues" or visit the Rutgers Cooperative Extension web site at www.rce.rutgers.edu/presentations and click on Asian Long-Horned Beetle under "Plant Agriculture."

PHOTO CAPTION: NJDA tree climber Kevin Freeman inspects a tree in Carteret on Tuesday, searching for signs of the Asian longhorned beetle.