



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Announces Funding for Additional Tree Replanting in Massachusetts Due to Asian Longhorned Beetle

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20, 2012—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today committed \$1 million to plant trees in the areas within Worcester County, Ma., which are fighting an infestation of the invasive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB).

“With our local, state and federal partners, USDA is doing everything it can to eradicate ALB in Massachusetts and restore a healthy population of trees to the affected communities,” said Rebecca Blue, Deputy Undersecretary for USDA’s Marketing and Regulatory Programs. “We also urge the public to remain vigilant in reporting any sightings of the pest. Together we can eradicate this beetle and ensure the health of our nation’s trees and the local economies that depend on them.”

The ALB, a tree-killing invasive insect, was first detected in Worcester in August 2008 by a homeowner, and currently 110 square miles in the central part of the state are regulated for the pest. The removal of infested trees reduces beetle populations and contributes towards the eradication of the pest.

Massachusetts has been conducting replanting efforts since 2009, after receiving \$500,000 from USDA and an additional \$4.487 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funding announced today will be provided to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to continue replanting efforts in cooperation with USDA’s US Forest Service. The tree species being replanted are a wide variety of non-host plants that are not vulnerable to ALB and typically include conifers and various deciduous trees such as ornamental cherries and tree lilacs.

The invasive pest is known to attack and kill healthy maple trees, as well as ash, birch, elm, European mountain ash, golden rain, hackberry, horse chestnut, katsura, London plane tree, mimosa, poplar and willow. Early detection is paramount to stopping the beetle and saving trees. An alert public can help.

The ALB is a large beetle. Its body is approximately 1- to 1-1/2 inches long and is shiny black with random white spots. Its antennae, which are longer than the insect’s body, are banded black and white and it has six legs which may have a bluish tint. Adult beetles typically first

appear during the month of July and will continue to be present throughout the summer and into the early fall months until hard frost which usually occurs in early November. Adult ALB can be found anywhere, including on trees, benches, patios and outdoor furniture, sides of houses and sidewalks, etc. For additional information, please go to <http://beetlebusters.info/>

APHIS ALB eradication partners in Massachusetts include the US Forest Service, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the city of Worcester, the towns of Holden, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury and Auburn, the city of Boston, and the town of Brookline.

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America's agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

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