

Asian Longhorned Beetle Tree Reforestation

NJ Forest Service Replants Communities Trees

The Challenge

In November 2004, a large infestation of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB), a deadly invasive insect, was discovered in the communities of Carteret and Rahway in northeastern New Jersey. This beetle is a serious pest in China, where it kills hardwood trees in roadside plantings, shelterbelts, and plantations. Followup surveys found more infested trees in Woodbridge and Linden. A Federal and State quarantine zone regulating movement of potentially infested trees and branches was eventually widened to include Roselle Borough, Clark Township, and Elizabeth, New Jersey. Currently, the only effective way to eliminate ALB is to remove infested trees and destroy them by chipping and burning.

The Solution

In the infested area of New Jersey, a cooperative emergency response effort of tree removal and replanting was conducted by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry; and the New Jersey Forest Service (NJFS). Over 23,000 trees were removed in an effort to eradicate the infestation. Many of these trees were chipped and used as a “biofuel” by a local power plant. As trees were removed, a tree planting effort was initiated in cooperation with willing landowners and businesses, and with local governments. This tree planting was made possible by a \$2.38 million USDA grant matched by the State to replace trees in affected communities with ALB-resistant species. Trees were planted in municipal and county parks, on street rights-of-way, and other in public spaces. Trees were also offered to both business and residential property owners. Leftover trees were donated to local communities for planting on public property.

The New Jersey Forest Service met with municipal and county officials to discuss replanting on public property.

“No one likes to see trees cut down, but the eradication method of removing high-risk host trees near infested trees has been proven effective.” —New Jersey Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus



The New Jersey Forest Service replanted trees on residential and commercial property. In the background is an electrical plant where trees removed due to ALB were used to generate electricity.

State Forest Service staff shared tree species lists, explaining the pros and cons of each species. They also sent letters to private property owners, alerting them that a State forester would stop by to sign them up for replacement trees. Owners were offered the same number of replacement trees as the number of trees removed, space permitting. The foresters gave property owners special instructions on caring for newly planted trees during hot, dry summers including tips on proper mulching and watering trees.

Resulting Benefits

- 5,698 trees have been planted in Middlesex and Union Counties since 2005.
- Fifty-one different tree species have been planted, no more than 20 percent of any tree genera, and no more than 10 percent of any one species. Variety is not only the spice of life; it lowers the chances that a future pest could once again wipe out so many of the community’s trees.

Sharing Success

- Outreach and education have been the most effective methods for raising awareness and understanding of ALB and reforestation.
- The NJFS will continue to work with affected municipalities on the planting, care, and maintenance of trees, helping to ensure more livable communities.



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