



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 INVASIVE ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

WASHINGTON, April 7, 2009--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is treating 66,854 trees susceptible to the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) with the insecticide imidacloprid in New York and New Jersey this spring.

The 2009 ALB treatment program will begin March 31 on 26,132 hardwood trees susceptible to the invasive insect in Staten Island, N.Y. Treatments there will end by May 9. In Brooklyn and Queens, N.Y., APHIS will conduct treatments on 39,626 trees from April 6 through June 20. Finally, the treatment program on 1,096 hardwood trees in Linden, N.J. will take place from April 27 through May 9.

APHIS will monitor all of the treatments, which are conducted by contracted, certified pesticide applicators only on trees susceptible to ALB (known as ALB host trees). Officials will primarily use a trunk-injection method with a hand-held application device in New Jersey and Staten Island, while trees in Brooklyn and Queens will be treated primarily by injecting imidacloprid into the soil around the base of trees.

The imidacloprid disperses through the tree's vascular system, which enables it to reach adult ALB insects that are feeding on small twigs and leaves, as well as any larvae feeding just beneath the bark of host trees. These treatments are just one part of the ALB cooperative eradication program's effort to prevent further infestation of this invasive insect and reduce overall beetle populations in the quarantine areas. Imidacloprid is used in the lawn care industry to kill lawn grubs and in some domestic pet treatments to kill fleas.

Adult ALB, which are about 1 to 1.5 inches long, have a shiny jet-black body with distinctive white spots and long antennae with black and white bands. A homeowner discovered the first ALB infestation in New York in 1996. Subsequent infestations in New Jersey were discovered in 2002 and 2004. An alert homeowner detected an infestation in central Massachusetts in August 2008.

Potentially, ALB 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 beetle also could impact such industries as maple syrup production and hardwood lumber processing, nurseries and tourism.

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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 area wide integrated pest eradication strategy. The goal is to eliminate this destructive insect from New York City, Long Island, New Jersey and Massachusetts 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 ALB infestation and/or to treat trees that are susceptible to beetle infestation.

The ALB Eradication Program is a cooperative effort among various federal, state and local agencies in New York and New Jersey, 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 effort, or to report signs of infestation 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 ALB Cooperative Eradication Program call or visit the APHIS Web site at www.aphis.usda.gov/ALB.

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