

Impact of Foreign Species:

Asian Long-Horned Beetle



What is it?

The Asian long-horned beetle (ALB) is an exotic pest threatening a wide variety of hardwood trees in North America. Adults are large (0.75 - 1.50 inches long) with very long black and white banded antennae. The body is glossy black with irregular white spots. The beetle was introduced into New York City, Chicago and New Jersey, and is a serious pest of hardwood trees. Adults can be seen from late spring to fall depending on the climate.

The Problem

This beetle is a serious threat to hardwood trees and has no known natural predator in North America. If the Asian long-horned beetle becomes established here, it has the potential to cause more damage than Dutch elm disease, chestnut blight, and the gypsy moth combined, destroying millions of acres of America's treasured hardwoods, including national forests and backyard trees. The beetle has the potential to damage such industries as lumber, furniture, maple syrup, nursery, and tourism.

Infestations

ALB has been found infesting trees in New York, Illinois, New Jersey, and Ontario. However, ALB has been intercepted in warehouses or at ports all over North America. Asian long-horned beetles normally do not spread quickly on their own. However, people can unintentionally increase the speed or spread of an infestation. Because beetle larvae live deep inside trees during the majority of the year, people can easily and unknowingly move the pest in firewood, live trees, or fallen timber. Although Asian long-horned beetles can fly distances greater than 400 yards, migration often depends on the abundance of suitable host materials. To limit human-caused spread of the Asian long-horned beetle, officials from State and Federal governments establish quarantines in areas known to be infested. The infested areas in New York and Chicago have both been quarantined to prevent the movement of infested wood. No one may remove firewood, trimmed branches, stumps, roots, or other wood debris from these quarantine areas.

Management

Quarantines have been established around infested areas to prevent accidental spread of ALB. All infested trees are being removed, chipped, and burned. Regulations on solid wood packing material from China have been established by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The Asian long-horned beetle's life cycle makes conventional insect eradication measures such as pesticides ineffective. Because the majority of the beetle's life is spent deep within the host tree, surface applied insecticides are not an option. At present, the only effective method of eliminating the beetle is to cut, chip, or burn infested trees and replace them with non-host species.