

Asian Longhorned Beetle

Imagine watching crews cut down every single tree on your street. Now, imagine living in Worcester, MA, where they've had to destroy about 25,000 trees so far. The culprit is this creature, the Asian longhorn beetle or ALB, and it could be coming soon to a forest near you.

After hitching a ride in wooden pallets, these insects, which come from China and Korea, proceeded to decimate trees in New York, Chicago, parts of New Jersey and Toronto, Canada. Now they're here in the Northeast, and if they spread, they could destroy forests from New England to Canada.

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In mid-summer, (just about now) the beetles emerge from perfectly round holes, which are about the size of a dime. The host tree is killed in a couple of years. Officials are trying to eradicate the ALB with pesticides and by cutting and chipping all trees in affected areas.

Now, here's the really scary part: firewood. The USDA estimates that the beetle went undetected in Worcester for at least ten years. That means firewood from the affected area was probably transported to other parts of New England. In Rhode Island, they've already had a problem with ALB-infected firewood. Two RI companies were fined nearly \$2,000 each for transporting 11 ash trees from the quarantined area in Worcester to North Kingstown. A bill has been introduced in the RI Senate that would make this a crime, and raise fines to up to \$25,000. ALB-infected firewood was also found at a home in Cranston. The homeowners had brought the wood from their property in Worcester.

Officials admit that it's highly likely that the beetle has already escaped from the quarantined area. The question is, where will it show up next? With one third of the trees in the northeast at risk, the stakes are frighteningly high. People like us – gardeners who care about trees – can help by doing two things: first, if you use [firewood](#) in your home or while camping, buy it locally – never transport it.

Second, go to this [USDA website](#) to learn how to recognize the Asian longhorn beetle and to find out what to do if you find one.

Cornell University also has an excellent [diagnostic website](#) to help you determine whether you have Asian longhorn beetles on your property.

Anoplophora glabripennis (Motschulsky); Family: Cerambycidae

Asian longhorned beetle (adult)

Larva, tunnelling within a tree trunk.

Photos from Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources - Forestry Archive, Bugwood.org



The Asian longhorned beetle is a recent immigrant to North America, which has established populations

in areas around New York City and Toronto. As of 2007, Asian longhorned beetles in Chicago Illinois were believed to have been eradicated, although one beetle was found in northern Illinois in 2008. In Worcester Massachusetts, a large beetle infestation was not discovered until 2008.

If you find a large (3/4 to 1 3/8 inch long), black beetle with white spots that you think may be the Asian longhorned beetle, please report it immediately. See this link for whom to contact in your state:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/alb/ident_reporting/identifying.shtm

The larvae of the Asian longhorned beetles tunnel in tree trunks feeding on the wood. A variety of hardwood trees are attacked in North America, especially maples.

Several sites on the internet have done a good job of providing fact sheets for the Asian longhorned beetle. Please visit the links below for more information.

USDA Forest Service updates and other information, including identification, tree species attacked, and quarantines:

<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/alb>

USDA links, including Factsheet, questions & answers, photos, and recent infestations:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/alb/alb_general_info.shtml