

Questions and Answers: Ohio Tree Removal for Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication

Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) (ALB) eradication efforts consist of science-based eradication activities that take place in and around regulated areas, including surveys to inspect ALB host trees for signs of infestation, removal of infested trees, and removal of high-risk host trees. Tree removal remains the most effective component for the successful eradication of ALB and is necessary to prevent the further spread of this destructive pest.

Q. Why are you removing trees on my property?

A. There is an infestation of ALB in Tate and Monroe townships, for which the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have established a quarantine for the impacted areas. As part of the effort to get rid of the pest, the program is removing ALB infested trees.

Q. What authority does the program operate under to allow access onto properties for surveys or tree removal?

A. These activities are authorized under the authority of the State of Ohio. Under the Ohio Revised Code—Section 927.69, which concerns the “inspection of nursery premises,” and Section 927.70, which concerns the “suppression of harmful or destructive plant pests”—the program can seize, quarantine, treat, or otherwise dispose of the pest, host, article, or commodity in such manner necessary to suppress, control, eradicate, or to prevent or retard the spread of a pest. Federal regulations also prevent the spread of pests injurious to plants and provide for their control and eradication. The Federal regulation for ALB can be obtained through the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7: Agriculture, Subpart—Asian Longhorned Beetle.

Q. Has the impact of tree removal on wildlife been considered?

A. Yes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in Columbus, OH, has provided technical assistance regarding the impact to federally listed threatened and endangered species. Currently, three endangered species (Indiana bat, running buffalo clover, and the rayed bean) are known to occur within the infested area of Clermont County. FWS personnel conducted a site visit and provided guidance and recommendations on measures to protect the three endangered species.

Q. Where will tree removals be taking place?

A. Tree removal operations will occur where known infested trees have been identified. Tree removals have begun southwest of Bethel.

Q. Will high-risk host trees be removed in addition to the known infested trees?

A. The removal of high-risk host trees is being proposed. A second environmental assessment (EA) will be issued to address the removal of high-risk host trees. The EA will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

Once issued, the EA will be available for public comment. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the document should contact Brendon Reardon at Brendon.Reardon@aphis.usda.gov, or 4700 River Road, Unit 26, Riverdale, MD 20737. To comment on the document, individuals should send comments to the attention of Brendon Reardon at the address noted above. All comments must be received within the 30-day comment period. All comments received will be considered and may result in changes to the proposed activities. Once all comments are received and considered, a final determination will be made available at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/alb.shtml

Q. When will tree removal start? And how quickly will the removal of trees be completed?

A. Tree removal began on the week of November 14, 2011, and will continue, weather permitting. There is no timeline established for how quickly tree removals will be completed; however, once the removal process begins, removals will continue until all the trees identified to be removed have been removed. It is anticipated that all known infested trees will be removed prior to the next ALB emergence.

Q. How will I know when you will be coming to my property to remove trees?

A. As a landowner, you should have received or will receive a legal notice from ODA indicating that removals will be starting. The eradication program will be working with landowners prior to removal operations taking place on their properties. You can also contact the program directly at (513) 381-7180.

Q. Will I be charged for the removal of these trees?

A. No. There is no cost to residents for the removal of trees for the eradication of ALB.

Q. Who will be conducting the tree removals?

A. The removal contract was awarded to Young's General Contracting, Inc., based out of Poplar Bluff, MO.

Q. How will the trees be removed?

A. Trees will be removed by the licensed contractor using tree removal equipment. Program officials will be on location daily with each contractor removal crew. The removal process consists of tree removals, grinding or treatment of identified infested tree stumps, as well as grinding down stumps in certain locations, chipping of removed trees and all infested wood (including infested firewood), disposal of wood chips, re-grading of any disturbed soil and re-seeding of any damaged lawn areas.

Q. How will the contractor know which trees to remove?

A. Prior to removal, program staff will mark the trees designated for removal with a red/orange diagonal slash about 4 feet from the ground. This work began on November 8, 2011, and will continue in advance of removals being conducted.

Q. Do you have to remove trees? Can any of them be saved?

A. Unfortunately, all infested trees need to be removed. The best science available indicates that also removing high-risk host trees located within a specified distance of infested trees provides the best chance of eradicating the insect from Ohio; high-risk host trees are likely to be found infested later on if they are left standing. The specified distance is based on various factors such as infestation levels, topography, and host density.

Q. When you say "removing high-risk host trees," what do you mean?

A. Host tree removal means that the program is proposing removing trees in which the ALB is able to complete its lifecycle. These include all species of the

following 13 genera: *Acer* (maple), *Aesculus* (horse chestnut), *Albizia* (mimosa), *Betula* (birch), *Celtis* (hackberry), *Cercidiphyllum* (katsura), *Fraxinus* (ash), *Koelreuteria* (golden raintree), *Platanus* (sycamore), *Populus* (poplar), *Salix* (willow), *Sorbus* (mountain ash), and *Ulmus* (elm). Trees that are unable to support ALB development are not removed by the eradication program. These include shade trees like oaks and beech, flowering trees such as crabapple and cherry trees, and evergreen trees like pines, firs, and spruces, etc.

Q. If you've inspected my tree(s), and have found them not to be infested, why are you still considering removal?

A. Inspections conducted through ground surveys are about 30 percent effective in detecting a lightly infested tree, and climbing surveys are about 60 percent effective in detecting a lightly infested tree. For every 10 infested trees found, another 3 to 4 infested trees are missed.

Q. Are there any alternatives to tree removals, such as using pesticides?

A. No. Unfortunately no pesticides will save an ALB infested tree, and pesticides alone will not eliminate an ALB infestation from an area. Host tree removals are the most effective way to eradicate, along with local residents adhering to quarantine terms.

Q. Will you be replacing the tree that you cut down?

A. Although replanting efforts have not been secured, resources are available through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry to assist landowners in managing their woodlots after the tree removal process is complete to aid reforestation.

Q. When will eradication be realized?

A. It is not possible to provide a timeframe for when eradication of ALB will be realized for Tate and Monroe townships. However, eradication efforts will continue until no signs of ALB remain.

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