

RIDEM Division of Agriculture ó Forest Pest Update 2014

In response to growing concern of the migration of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Connecticut and proximity of Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) in Worcester, MA, the RIDEM Division of Agriculture will be conducting outreach activities throughout the state. The goal of raising public awareness about these pests is to foster early detection in case these pests do infest Rhode Island. Early detection is the key to a successful eradication or quarantine program to stop the spread of pests and minimize tree loss. Without early detection these pests, especially ALB, have the potential to kill tens of thousands of trees across the state of Rhode Island.

One new outreach activity will be a tree tagging effort throughout the state, in which DEM personnel will be tagging host trees that are at risk of infestation in selected parks considered to be high risk and high traffic. The tags will contain information identifying the tree as a potential host, a website to visit for more information and instruction on what to do if the reader suspects a pest. DEM requests that if you do suspect a pest, you capture the insect so that proper identification can be made. The tags will be put up during mid-July and left up until the end of August, to coincide with when ALB adults are out and active. The month of August is also considered Forest Pest Awareness Month.

In addition to the tree tagging effort, RIDEM will have other outreach for Forest Pests at events throughout the state. This includes a movie night about the Worcester ALB infestation at the Jesse M. Smith library on July 15th at 6pm, and attendance at fairs such as the Washington County Fair (August 13-17), and the RINLA Green Market Festival in South Kingston on August 10th. The Forest Pest Coordinator for the state will also be attending RIFCOø summer twilight meeting on August 7th at Great Swamp Management Area.

For more information about forest pests, or an update on outreach events, please contact Cynthia Kwolek, RIDEM Div. of Agriculture, Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator, by phone at 401-949-1770 or by email at Cynthia.kwolek@dem.ri.gov.