

## Press Release

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### Extension of infestation zone for exotic beetle pest found in Kent

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As a result of the felling programme being carried out in response to the UK's first outbreak of Asian longhorn beetle, an infested tree has been confirmed towards the northern limit of the current infestation zone. This means that the zone has been extended by a further 100m with additional felling required within the extended area.

Larvae were discovered in the tree concerned after it had been felled, confirming the need to fell potential host trees in the infested zone. To date, survey work has confirmed that 65 trees in the zone have been found to be infested and over 1300 infested and potential host trees have been felled within the infestation zone.

Removal and incineration of trees from the extended area is expected to begin this week. The felling operation in this area should be complete by the end of June.

The most recent findings have been of young larvae which would not have reached the stage by this summer when they could develop into adult beetles and fly off into the surrounding area. It also suggests that the eggs were laid last year, rather than earlier, supporting the view that the tree is close to the limit of the infested area. This means that there is remains a good chance that the outbreak can be contained and eradicated, although further survey work will be necessary to confirm the position.

In the meantime, if anyone suspects they have seen an Asian longhorn beetle, or evidence of its presence please contact the Fera Plant Health Helpline 0844 2480071 or email [planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth.info@fera.gsi.gov.uk). If possible, the beetle should be caught and placed in a secure container so that an Inspector can collect it. The beetles are not harmful to humans, though they should be handled with caution as they can nip the skin.

**ENDS**

## Notes for Editors:

### 1. Eradication action:

- Felling of all host trees within the infested zone is being undertaken, both those where symptoms are evident and those not showing any symptoms. All felled material is being held locally for inspection before being incinerated on-site.
- Known host tree species comprise: *Acer* (maples and sycamores); *Aesculus* (horse chestnut); *Albizia* (Mimosa, silk tree); *Alnus* (alder); *Betula* (birch); *Carpinus* (hornbeam); *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (Katsura tree); *Corylus* (hazel); *Fagus* (beech); *Fraxinus* (ash); *Koelreuteria paniculata*; *Platanus* (plane); *Populus* (poplar); *Prunus* (cherry, plum); *Robinia pseudoacacia* (false acacia/black locust); *Salix* (willow, willow); *Sophora* (Pagoda tree); *Sorbus* (mountain ash, whitebeam etc); *Quercus palustris* (American pin oak); *Quercus rubra* (North American red oak); and *Ulmus* (elm).
- Residents and landowners within the 2km buffer zone are being asked to hold back from any felling/tree surgery or pruning of woody shrubs in gardens. This is because the beetle's larvae live in trunks and branches so it is important to make sure these are properly disposed of. Any residents that do need to prune or fell trees or woody shrubs, have been asked to ensure that all woody material is taken to an appropriate Kent County Council waste transfer station or recycling site.

### 2. ALB facts:

- The beetle has been moving around the world hidden in timber imported from China, notably wood packaging material such as crates and dunnage.
- ALB (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is a major pest in China where it has killed millions of poplar trees planted to prevent soil erosion. In the USA, \$0.7billion has been spent on campaigns to eradicate this pest.
- A range of deciduous trees in the UK could be hosts, although all the interceptions in the UK until the present outbreak have been found to come from wood packaging material.

The beetles are large (20 - 40mm long) and distinctive being a shiny black colour with white markings. They also have very long black antennae ringed with pale blue or white markings. In appearance, they are almost identical to Citrus longhorn beetle, (*Anoplophora chinensis*) another non-indigenous longhorn beetle that threatens trees in Britain. Fera has produced a video on the Citrus longhorn beetle which can be viewed at:

<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/pestsDiseases/clb/clbVideo.cfm>

- The adult beetles scrape away a portion of bark on a host tree to lay their eggs just underneath. The lifecycle from egg to beetle is one to two years in Asia, possibly longer in the UK. Although the larvae are unlikely to emerge as adult beetles before the end of June in the UK, it is important that all infested and potentially infested trees as early are removed as early as possible before then. Beetles emerge then mate and lay eggs, after which they die. When the larvae hatch, they feed by boring in the main trunk and branches. This makes them difficult to detect.
- The most obvious symptoms of Asian longhorn beetle damage are the circular adult exit holes which are around 10 mm in diameter and are generally found in the main trunk and branches. Other signs which may be present but are much less obvious, include, piles of sawdust like droppings at the base of infested trees, scraped bark, sap bleeding from the sites where eggs have been laid and bark feeding damage on smaller branches and shoots.
- Not only do the larvae cause structural damage, this damage also leaves the tree susceptible to other diseases. Eventually this may lead to the death of the tree.
- Analysis of climate data by scientists at Fera suggests that most of England and Wales and some warmer coastal areas of Scotland are suitable for beetle establishment, but south-east England and the south coast are at greatest risk.
- More detailed information can be found on the following websites:  
Fera: <http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/asianlonghornbeetle>  
Forestry Commission: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4U4J45>

3. The **Food and Environment Research Agency** (Fera) is an Executive Agency of the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Its remit is to provide robust evidence, rigorous analysis and expert professional advice to government, international organisations and the private sector, in order to support and develop a sustainable and secure food chain, a healthy natural environment, and to protect the global community from biological and chemical risks.
4. The **Forestry Commission** is the government department responsible for protecting and expanding forests and woodlands and increasing their value to society and the environment.

**Further information from:**

Fera Media Officer: Alison Wilson  
Tel: 01904 462380  
Email: [alison.wilson@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:alison.wilson@fera.gsi.gov.uk)

Forestry Commission Press Officer: Charlton Clark  
Tel: 0131 314 6500 / 07810 181067 (mobile)  
Email: [charlton.clark@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:charlton.clark@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

