

## **Situation update, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

Close inspection of potential host trees after they have been felled has identified an infested tree, Ash-leaved Maple (*Acer negundo*), right at the northern edge of the current infestation zone. The larvae found in this tree were very young, which suggests that the adult beetle that laid the eggs only reached the tree last year. The implications of this finding are that the current infestation zone will be extended by a further 100m radius and all potential host trees within this area will need to be felled. Work is progressing to determine the exact number of trees to be felled in the extended area.

To date 65 trees have been found to be infested or highly likely to be infested. Over 100 live larvae have been recovered from tree samples taken within the infestation zone and this is expected to increase as further samples are analysed.

All potential host trees within the extended infested zone area are being mapped and the size, species and numbers of trees felled is being recorded. It is expected that the new finding on the edge of the infestation zone will extend the felling operation by two to three weeks, with expected completion towards the end of June, which is in advance of the main emergence period of the beetle. An incinerator for destruction of the felled material is now on site and in operation. It is expected that the incinerator will be on site for about another two weeks

Fortunately this outbreak was detected before the adult beetle emergence period, providing time to inspect and deal with infested trees. However, as a precaution, plans are being made for a further survey within the infestation zone this summer (to look for evidence of fresh beetle emergence) and in the autumn (to look for further evidence after leaf fall).

Once felling in the area is complete Fera's Plant Health Inspectors will begin planning for the setting up of "sentinel" trees within a 2km radius of the original outbreak. These trees (of a species known to be favoured hosts for this outbreak) will act as monitoring devices and will be regularly inspected for any signs of the Asian longhorn beetle. This monitoring will continue for up to four years.

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. Residents in this zone who 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.

A further public awareness exercise over the whole area (and nationally) will take place in mid July 2012, just before the start of the adult beetle emergence period.

In the meantime, we urge everyone within the 2km buffer zone to keep a look out for the beetle or evidence of its presence to ensure the best prospects for eradicating this outbreak.

### **What to do if you see one**

Suspected sightings of this beetle must be reported to the Fera Plant Health Helpline on 0844 248 0071, providing information about the damage caused, tree species and location. Any specimens of the beetle found must be packed securely in a sturdy container. The beetles are not harmful to humans although they should be handled with care as they can nip the skin.