

## **PRESS RELEASE**

July 9, 2010

As a result of the reports of the discovery of the Asian Longhorned Beetle in Boston there may be a heightened concern among residents about the possibility that the destructive beetle could be found here in Stow. Since we are midway between Boston and Worcester where the control of the ALB had a devastating effect, I have been asked what the likelihood is of the ALB not being in Stow. Well, the answer is that it is very likely that the ALB is NOT in Stow, because the current thinking among the professionals involved is that the beetles made it to Boston with the help of human activity, not through migration of the beetle from Worcester.

The adult ALB emerges from its tunnels within a tree between July and September, where it then feeds on the foliage. As long as there is foliage to feed on, an Asian Longhorned beetle is not likely to migrate, and if it does, it usually only flies to a neighboring tree. With the help of a strong wind, a beetle could travel a little further from the host tree, which is why the initial quarantined area around the discovery of an ALB is 1.5 miles. Several generations of ALB will often stay in one tree for several years until they have killed it. A common telltale characteristic of an infected tree is that it dies back, from the top downward.

Although it is unlikely that the ALB is here in Stow, it is still important to be vigilant, and residents should be on the lookout for these critters. Since the last Stow Independent article on the subject, I have received several reports of possible sightings, but all the ones that I personally viewed were actually the similar-looking White-Spotted Sawyer beetle, also known as the Spotted Pine Sawyer. The Pine Sawyer is more of a bronzy-black, where the ALB is a glossy black color. And the Pine Sawyer always has a distinctive white spot centered on its back, below its head where the wings meet.

Comparisons between the ALB and similar species can be found on several websites, including the UMass Extension; Mass Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) at [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr); US Forest Service; and the US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). The UMass Extension has an excellent downloadable slide show of how to recognize the ALB. And the MDAR has a printable ALB pocket guide that can be found at <http://bit.ly/albpocketmod>. The MDAR also suggest that anyone can go to their website or call 1-866-702-9938 if you think you've seen an Asian Longhorned Beetle or signs of ALB tree damage.

I am always available to assist anyone in identifying a beetle if you cannot do it on your own. Suspect beetles should be put in a container that they can't chew through, and preferably left at the Highway Barn or Town Building along with your phone number and the message that the beetle is to be given to me for identification. Placing them in a freezer for a while before delivering them can help if you're worried about them chewing their way out of a container.

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