

Governor Ted Strickland
Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher
Director Robert J. Boggs

Office of Communication
8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
Phone: 614-752-9817 • Fax: 614-466-7754
www.ohioagriculture.gov • communications@agri.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohioans Urged to Use Caution When Disposing of Tree Debris

Columbus, Ohio (Sept. 19, 2008) – Due to the current efforts to clear debris caused by the recent windstorm that swept through the state, the Ohio Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources advise Ohioans to be aware of the potential threat of spreading Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

EAB is a tree-killing insect from Asia, inadvertently imported 10-15 years ago. The pest is a wood-boring beetle that kills ash trees in three to five years. All Ohio counties with reported cases of EAB have been placed under quarantine by the Ohio Department of Agriculture in an effort to slow and prevent the spread. It is illegal to move ash trees, parts of an ash tree, and all hardwood firewood out of Ohio's quarantined areas. Violators face state fines up to \$4,000 and additional federal fines.

Since EAB was first discovered in Ohio in 2003, the department has placed 43 counties under quarantine: Allen, Auglaize, Butler, Champaign, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Darke, Delaware, Defiance, Erie, Fairfield, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Medina, Mercer, Miami, Montgomery, Ottawa, Paulding, Portage, Preble, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Union, Van Wert, Warren, Wayne, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties. For the latest quarantine map, go to the following Web site: www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab/plnt-eab-maps.stm.

The following guidelines must be followed when dealing with storm debris:

All ash wood debris must stay inside the limits of the quarantine unless chipped to a size of less than 1 inch in diameter and length.

There are several locations, including yard waste recycling facilities and firewood dealers, within quarantined areas where hardwood firewood may be disposed.

All hardwood debris chips, smaller than 1 inch in diameter and length, and non-ash hardwood logs, longer than 4 feet, may travel outside the quarantined area for disposal. Ash logs may be moved with a compliance agreement in the EAB non-flight season, Oct. 1 – April 1.

Businesses and industries using hardwood materials must first apply for a compliance agreement through the Ohio Department of Agriculture to move or accept ash trees, parts of an ash tree, or hardwood firewood from quarantined areas. For a list of compliant companies, go to the following Web site: <http://www.ohioagriculture.gov/eab/plnt-eab-compliance.stm>.

For further questions and information about compliance agreements, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture's EAB office at 1-888-OHIO-EAB.

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Media Contact: Kaleigh Frazier, Public Information Officer, 614-728-6211

