APHIS in Action: Ohio Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program Gifts Residents Free Trees

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Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service employees in Ohio working to eradicate the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) in Clermont County held their first tree giveaway. Clermont County residents have been heavily impacted by the ALB, which kills trees it attacks and caused the removal of over 118,000 trees. APHIS ALB employees saw

an opportunity to make a difference and started a Tree Giveaway Program.

In early 2022, APHIS and Ohio Department of Agriculture employees developed a plan to grow non-host trees to give to residents. They partnered with the U.S. Forest Service for funding and received a grant from Taking Root, a non-profit organization that works to restore forests. The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Region Council of Governments offered its online registration system, and the program office landlord approved converting space on the property to create a small nursery. That spring, employees planted the first seedlings. They volunteered their time and materials to plant, grow, and harvest the trees.

Two years later the last weekend in October, the Program gave 75 residents 283 trees. The native tree types varied from eastern redbud, Kentucky coffee tree, northern catalpa, swamp white oak, and tulip tree- all resistant to ALB. The trees went to people affected by ALB and the eradication efforts. Residents who registered for the tree giveaway were able to receive up to 5 trees.

The next tree giveaway will be in the fall of 2025. The program expects to receive an additional 250 bare-root trees, including bald cypress, burr oak, and sweetgum thanks to additional U.S. Forest Service funding. The goal is to expand the nursery and work with community partners so replanting efforts can continue long after the beetle is eradicated.

The Ohio Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program previously partnered with the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Tree Canopy Enhancement Program to replant trees in the area. Through different funding sources, those partnerships helped replant over 3,000 trees.

For more information about ALB and program activities, please call 1-866-702-9938. Or visit https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/alb.

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