

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
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NEWS RELEASE
April 18, 2017

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APRIL MARKS INVASIVE PLANT PEST AND DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

Charleston, WV – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) want to remind the public that April is Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month. To protect our state, both agencies are asking West Virginians to join in the battle against invasive plant pest and diseases.

“The USDA and the WVDA work together on numerous projects, but this is one of the most important. Protecting our forests and West Virginia’s natural beauty is a top priority for my administration,” stated Agriculture Commissioner Kent Leonhardt. “We are calling on all citizens of West Virginia to pitch in and join our efforts.”

Damaging pests like the emerald ash borer and Asian longhorned beetles are a threat to all forests within the Mountain State. These pests can hide in firewood, logs, wood packing material or on trees and shrubs. It is important for everyone to learn more about these destructive plant pests and to take steps help stop the spread of invasive species.

“Invasive plant pests and diseases are a threat in almost every state. If we allow them to enter and become established, these pests could devastate our neighborhoods, public green spaces and cause damage to native species of plants, forests, watersheds, lakes, rivers and water delivery systems,” said USDA State Plant Health Director Eric Ewing. “As it stands today, damage from invasive plant pests costs our nation about \$40 billion annually.”

“A lot of these invasive species did not get here on their own. Through human activity, they were transported to West Virginia,” said WVDA Plant Pest Regulatory Program Coordinator Michael Arnold. “Please call the USDA or the WVDA if you have any questions before you move campers or firewood.”

For further questions or more information, contact Michael Arnold (304-558-2212) or Eric Ewing (304-343-8585)

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