



media release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 7, 2004

INFORMATION OPEN HOUSE ON OCTOBER 28 TO DISCUSS TREE-KILLING FOREST PESTS

Recent infestations of the Asian Long-horned Beetle (ALHB) in the Hwy 400 – 407/Steeles Avenue area of Toronto, and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the Windsor area are creating significant concern among foresters, the forest industry, environmentalists and woodlot owners in Ontario. Each exotic pest kills healthy trees, and neither insect is known to have any natural control in North America.

The impact of these pests on our economy will be significant. Even in southern Ontario, the forest industry ranks very high in terms of employment; healthy forests are crucial to varied outdoor recreational activities. For this reason the Town of Caledon, the Halton-Peel Woodlands and Wildlife Stewardship (HPWWS) council and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will hold an information session on ALHB and EAB for landowners and other interested individuals on **Thursday, October 28, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm in the Council Chambers at Town Hall, 6311 Old Church Road (east of Airport Road), Caledon East.**

The Emerald Ash Borer is presently killing up to 100% of all ash trees where it is established in southwestern Ontario. An 8 -10 km wide Ash Free Zone (AFZ) stretching 30 km from Lake Erie to Lake St. Clair, has been established in the municipality of Chatham-Kent. It is hoped this AFZ will slow the eastern spread of EAB. As of late August, there have been 17 new infested sites located east of the AFZ. Ash trees are an important part of Canada's urban and rural landscape, commonly found on city streets, woodlots, windbreaks and forests from Saskatchewan to Newfoundland and Labrador. Hardwood forest production is valued at \$1.4 billion annually in Canada, of which ash trees are an important component.

The North American control option for the Asian Long-horned Beetle involves removal and chipping of infested trees during the winter months. ALHB is a relatively poor flier and it over-winters in host trees. Humans help ALHB spread through movement of forest products, using surplus wooden pallets of questionable origin in outdoor furnaces, or by unknowingly transporting adult beetles in cargo. If this beetle escapes into our maple and poplar forests the economic and ecological impacts would be significant, and consequences may include the collapse of our hardwood industry in Ontario south of the French River, the disappearance of our maple syrup industry, and great expense to municipalities for the removal of dead, unsafe trees, and their replacement.

Woodlands are important habitat for numerous animals and birds, and integral to the health of soils and watersheds. The loss of trees from urban and parkland forests would reduce or eliminate food and shelter sources for wildlife, decrease biodiversity, and seriously disturb the overall ecology of Canadian forests.

To report suspected sightings of either beetle, please call the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](http://www.cfia.gc.ca) at 1-800-442-2342.

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