

They just keep coming....

Two New Detections Highlight the Constant Threat of Invasive Insects

Two recent discoveries highlight the ongoing challenge of invasive insects in the West.

The first, in June, was the discovery of an established [emerald ash borer](#) population in Forest Grove, Oregon - the first detection of the pest on the West Coast. The wood-boring pest, native to China, has killed some 100 million ash trees in the United States since it was first detected in Michigan in 2002 and then rapidly spread to 35 states and as far west as Boulder, Colorado.

Against the [urging of as-not-yet-infested Western states](#), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service ended its emerald ash borer quarantine in January 2021, allowing the movement of ash wood, ash wood products and hardwood firewood between infested and uninfested areas.

APHIS explained its decision in a Q&A publication:

"The quarantine has been unsuccessful at stopping the spread of this invasive pest. By removing the domestic quarantine regulations, APHIS can redirect available resources toward rearing and releasing tiny wasps to serve as biological control agents."

Oregon State Extension has an [updated emerald ash borer web page](#) posted, with the latest news and identification and reporting information, including some pages in Spanish.

In California, the news was slightly better but still worrying. In July, at a California Department of Food and Agriculture border inspection station in Truckee, a mass of [spotted lanternfly eggs](#) were found in a load of firewood that had been hauled from New Jersey to California.

That invasive insect was first detected in the United States in 2014 in Pennsylvania and has spread throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region and into the Midwest. It's a significant economic threat to the West as its host plants include grape, hop, apple, stone fruit, almond and walnut.

Here's the APHIS [webpage on the spotted lanternfly](#).

A related rant:

Don't Haul Firewood from New Jersey to California. Don't Move Firewood – Period

The most baffling and maddening thing about the spotted lanternfly story above is that somebody thought it was a good idea to haul firewood from New Jersey to California.

To be clear, this is NOT a good idea. After years of drought and a bark beetle outbreak that killed millions of trees, California has plenty of its own firewood, thank you very much.

In fact, there's a whole multi-agency outreach campaign simply named [Don't Move Firewood](#) that has an excellent website filled with lots of good information, maps, tips for finding firewood and frequently asked questions.

The top question: How far is too far to move firewood? The answer: 50 miles is too far but 10 miles or less is best. (In case you're wondering, it's 2,700 miles from the Garden State to the Golden State.)

Check out the Don't Move Firewood webpage for more... or just remember their name.