



Help Stop Insect & Disease Invasions

TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN

No. **56** Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio • \$3.00



Although the threat of invasive pests is greater than ever, anyone with a love for trees can help professionals slow the spread or eradicate the insects and diseases that destroy our community trees. In some cases, help from citizens can even result in eradication.

*V*ast acreages of forests in our western mountains are turning brown as bark beetles spread across the once-green landscape. In earlier times, the American chestnut was almost completely destroyed in our eastern forests by a fungus from a foreign land. Although dealing with these kinds of epidemics is mostly the purview of professional foresters, insects and diseases that attack urban trees become everyone's responsibility. This bulletin is a call to action! We can all play a role in stopping the spread of invasive insects and diseases if we just know how to help.

America is under attack! The enemies in this case are insects and diseases that are destroying the shade trees in our urban forests. They are spreading at an alarming rate and killing across a broad spectrum of our most treasured species – trees like ashes, black walnuts, maples, and hemlocks.

The first serious invasion that occurred was in 1930. The now-infamous Dutch elm disease came to America on a load of logs from Europe. In this case, a deadly fungus did the damage, and it was transported from tree to tree by a tiny bark beetle. The result was that eventually our native elms were attacked throughout the country. In some communities where the streets were lined with this favored species, the cities were rendered nearly treeless. In fact, the shock of this invasion launched the creation of tree boards and urban forestry as we know it.

Many lessons were learned from the traumas of Dutch elm disease, including the need for diverse plantings instead of monocultures, proper disposal of infected wood, and the benefits of early detection. Today, the threats and need for action are greater than ever. This is because of our shrinking world. International trade is growing, transportation is faster, and incoming shipments are no longer restricted to seaports on the periphery of our borders. Hitchhiking pests arrive on clothing, logs, wooden packing materials, and even hidden in the wooden cores of artificial plants that decorate our homes and offices.

In the best of American tradition, we are rising to the challenge. Our government scientists and urban foresters are working overtime to control current invasions. But they need help. This bulletin is intended to expand the important function of citizen monitoring. Through this early alert system, it is possible to slow or even stop the spread of invasive pests.



Arbor Day Foundation®

100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410