

**Why SUFC supports  
Funding for USDA APHIS Program**

**Non-native insects and disease pathogens threaten SUFC's urban forest goals**

The 130 million acres of forests and trees found in our nation's urban environments provide many environmental services valued by SUFC. Large, mature trees decrease cooling energy costs, help capture storm water, reduce levels of airborne pollutants, promote human health through increased physical activity and reduced stress, and add thousands of dollars to property values.

**Unfortunately, these environmental services can be lost when urban trees are killed by non-native insects and disease pathogens introduced as a result of international trade. A large tree canopy cannot be replaced in-kind by planting a new tree.**

Urban trees are particularly vulnerable to non-native pests because most imported goods arrive in city ports and are destined for cities and suburbs. Pest introductions are a constant threat: 35 out of 68,000 shipping containers arriving in the country each day is infested by tree-killing pests. Cities across the country receiving a high proportion of the most risky shipments include:

Atlanta	Jacksonville, FL	Richmond, VA
Baltimore	Los Angeles/Long Beach	San Francisco
Boston	New York City	Seattle
Chicago	Philadelphia	Tampa, FL
Columbia, SC	Pittsburgh	Virginia Beach
Dallas, TX	Portland, OR	Washington, D.C.
Houston	Providence, RI	

What kind of damage do these pests cause? The emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees in cities from New England to Kansas, and has shown no signs of stopping its spread. Ash has been a popular street and park tree; in many cities, ash trees make up more than 20% of the trees. Once killed by the emerald ash borer, the trees must be removed quickly to avoid property damage, injuries, and resulting litigation when the trees fall. The costs to cities of removing dying ash and replanting new trees have been estimated at \$10 billion to \$20 billion. Ash are large trees, so their loss also reduces the ecosystem services.

Although the emerald ash borer outbreak has already spread to 177,000 square miles in 25 states, sustaining containment activities remains worthwhile because this insect threatens more than 200 million ash trees growing in regions outside the currently infested area, especially in cities and towns of the Great Plains, West, and South. In the Dakotas, ash makes up 20% - 38% of urban trees. In Los Angeles, 8% of the tree canopy would be at risk to emerald ash borer if it were to reach that city. In Portland, Oregon, 4% of the city's street trees would be vulnerable.

Almost 20% of Los Angeles' tree canopy is threatened by pests already present in the area, especially the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers and goldspotted oak borer. Indeed, these borers – already widespread in the Los Angeles area and south to the Mexican border – attack more than half the tree species planted in urban areas in southern California cities and towns.

Already, municipal governments across the country are spending more than \$2 billion each year to remove trees on city property killed by the non-native pests such as the emerald ash borer. Homeowners

are spending \$1 billion to remove and replace trees on their properties and are absorbing an additional \$1.5 billion in reduced property values and reducing the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Tree-killing insects that are here but not yet widespread pose even greater threats to urban forests. The Asian longhorned beetle attacks a wide range of tree species, including maples, elms, and sycamores and plane trees. In cities ranging from Baltimore to Jersey City, half or more of the street and park trees would be killed by the Asian longhorned beetle. An aggressive eradication program has so far prevented the Asian longhorned beetle from spreading to vulnerable cities ... but any let-up would expose these cities to disaster. And the beetle could be introduced to many other areas via imports from Asia. Close to 10% of Seattle's trees would be killed by the Asian longhorned beetle if it is introduced there. In Portland, more than one quarter of the street trees would be killed by the Asian longhorned beetle. Both cities receive huge volumes of imports from Asia that could be transporting this insect.

Experience has shown that the costs of response and reaction are at least 10 times greater than the cost of prevention.

### **What Can We Do?**

Protecting our cities' tree resources depends on success in preventing introductions of additional non-native tree-killing pests, fast action to eradicate any such pests that evade other safeguards, and preventing spread of those that are established. Responsibility for preventing such introductions and leading eradication and containment programs falls to an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS sets the rules under which imports are allowed to enter the country; the goal is to prevent pest introductions *via* those imports. APHIS also funds pest-detection surveillance at high-risk locations. Finally, APHIS funds programs aimed at eradicating those damaging non-native pests that have evaded the earlier measures.

While APHIS has the lead, the USDA Forest Service assists in managing newly introduced pests. USDA Forest Service also has the lead in developing and implementing strategies to manage pests which have been in the country for decades or more – pests which still threaten urban trees.

With import levels rising, APHIS' task grows more difficult each year. If APHIS is to succeed in protecting our forests from non-native pests, **SUFC** must help ensure sustained funding levels for the agency's two programs that target tree-killing pests:

- the **“Tree and Wood Pest”** account has been funded at about \$54 million each year. This program funds APHIS' eradication and containment programs targeting wood-boring insects such as the emerald ash borer and Asian longhorned beetle. The program has already suffered a 30% reduction from 5 years ago. Maintaining funding at \$54 million is vital to enabling our government to sustain efforts to curtail spread of insects that are already established; additional funds are needed to respond to new threats.
- the **“Specialty Crops”** budget account funds APHIS' program to stop spread of the sudden oak death pathogen to the East *via* trade in nursery plants. The “specialty crop” program is allocated \$164 million. It is important to sustain this level of funding.