# USDA Reminds the Public: Help Protect America’s Trees—Buy Firewood Where You Burn It

### *Moving Firewood Long Distances Can Spread Invasive Forest Pests*

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 1, 2026—As fall camping, hunting seasons, and winter home-heating get underway, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is urging everyone to make safe firewood choices that help prevent the spread of invasive forest pests.

“Invasive pests pose significant risks to our forests, parks, and communities,” said **USDA Under Secretary Dudley Hoskins.** “Observing federal and state firewood quarantines, including those for spongy moth and Asian longhorned beetle, helps protect the trees we rely on for recreation, wildlife habitat, shade, and clean air.”

“Healthy forests depend on everyone doing their part to stop invasive pests,” said **Forest Service Chief Schultz.** “Buying firewood where you burn it is one of the simplest ways people can protect the places they love, from neighborhood parks to our national forests. Local firewood keeps harmful insects from hitchhiking into new areas, helping us safeguard wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and the communities that rely on America’s trees.”

This October, APHIS is joining partners across the country to recognize National Firewood Month, a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the risks of moving firewood. Tree-killing insects and plant diseases can hide inside or on the surface of firewood. While these pests don’t travel far on their own, moving firewood even a short distance can carry threats like spongy moth, Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and other invasive insects—moving them hundreds of miles into new areas.

Firewood movement may be restricted in many areas. Several states maintain quarantines that limit how untreated firewood can be moved within or across state lines. These quarantines are designed to prevent the spread of invasive insects that damage forests and cause costly control and eradication efforts. APHIS encourages all travelers, and anyone who uses firewood at home, to know and follow the rules that apply where they live, camp, hunt, or heat their homes.

Here are simple ways you can help slow the spread of forest pests:

- Buy firewood near where you will burn it. Purchase firewood close to your destination, whether a campsite, cabin, or your own home. “Local” wood means it comes from the immediate area and stays there.
- Buy certified heat-treated firewood. Heat-treated firewood has been processed to eliminate insects and diseases. Look for a state or federal certification mark on the packaging.
- Gather firewood on site, when allowed. Many parks and campgrounds permit gathering small amounts of firewood locally. Check with the land manager before collecting.
- Use it all at the same location. Do not take leftover firewood home or to a different site. Burn it where you bought or gathered it.

Pay attention to firewood rules. Campers, hunters, anglers, and RV owners can unknowingly move pests in firewood when they travel. Only transport certified, heat-treated wood or plan to gather or buy wood at your destination. Home and cabin owners who heat with wood should buy firewood from reputable local dealers who understand and comply with firewood movement restrictions. Some operations may not be aware of quarantine rules. Fall tourists and “leaf peepers” travelers should purchase firewood locally, buy certified heat-treated wood, or gather on site when allowed.

Visit www.aphis.usda.gov/hungrypests to learn how invasive pests spread, how to identify them, and how you can help protect the places you love. Report suspected invasive pests to your local State Plant Health Director. Join the conversation throughout October using #FirewoodMonth.

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