



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

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**Immediate Release**

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**Clermont Homeowners Asked to Check Trees for Signs of Destructive Beetle**

**Batavia, Ohio.** If you think you have a tree in your yard that could be infested by Asian longhorned beetles, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) at 1-855-252-6450 or 1-966-702-9938. “We are currently assessing the situation in Clermont County to determine how large the infestation is,” said United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) spokeswoman Rhonda Santos. “If a tree is infested, it can be cut down and removed at no cost to the homeowner. Homeowners will be consulted regarding the situation. Citizens can assist efforts by allowing program officials access to their property to evaluate susceptible trees for signs of infestation, and by reporting sightings of the beetle or any signs of infestation.”



As a result of the discovery of the destructive beetle, the state of Ohio is restricting the movement of wood out of Tate Township and East Fork State Park. That means that it is illegal to move any logs, firewood, stumps, roots, or branches out of those two areas. According to the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Ohio is the fifth state to detect the Asian longhorned beetle; the beetle is an invasive insect that feeds on certain species of hardwood trees, eventually killing them.

“They are hairy, scary, big bugs,” said Harmony Hill Vineyard owner Bill Skvarla, who discovered the beetles in three trees on his property near Bethel. “One of the Autumn Blaze maple trees has been taken down and two more will be soon. I’ve been told by inspectors that they think the bugs came into this country in packing material from Asia.”

During a visit to his Bethel vineyard, Skvarla said only three trees appear to be impacted on his property, with no damage to the grapes. If not controlled, the ODA reports the beetle targets numerous species of trees, including maples, which alone are valued at more than \$200 billion to standing timber in Ohio.

According to the ODA, signs of infestation include perfectly round exit holes and pockmarks on tree trunks and branches where female beetles deposit eggs. “All their burrowing and tunneling eats away at the tree,” said Skvarla. For more information about the Asian longhorned beetle, visit the websites [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) or [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov). The website [www.BeetleBusters.info](http://www.BeetleBusters.info) is another helpful place to obtain information.

*Pictured above: Harmony Hill Vineyards owner Bill Skvarla stands next to one of the three trees on his property near Bethel that are infested by the Asian longhorned beetle.*

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**For additional information about this or other county news, contact Clermont County Communications Director Kathy Lehr at (513) 732-7597 or by e-mail, [klehr@co.clermont.oh.us](mailto:klehr@co.clermont.oh.us)**

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