

Fight against beetle widening About 200 more trees will be cut down to expand the quarantine zone in the Rahway River area.

Associated Press

LINDEN – Agriculture officials plan to remove about 200 additional trees in central New Jersey in a bid to prevent further infestation by the destructive Asian longhorned beetle. As a result, the quarantine zone in the Rahway River area will be extended for the first time into Roselle and Elizabeth, the state Agriculture Department said this week.

Nearly 16,200 trees have already been cut down in Carteret and Woodbridge in Middlesex County, and Linden and Rahway in Union County. The additional removals were prompted by the discovery last week of beetle eggs in a horse chestnut in Linden.

The Asian longhorned beetle kills hardwood trees. Host trees - mostly maples, ashes, birches, elms and London planes - must be removed because the beetles create tunnels and lay eggs in their bark, with the young insects then consuming trees from the inside before emerging as adults. Insecticide is useless after an egg hatches.

New Jersey's infestation began in 2002 in Jersey City, where about 450 trees were removed. Authorities are now trying to stem a larger outbreak that began in August 2004 in towns along the Rahway River. The shiny-black beetles are 1 to 1 1/2 inches long and have white spots and long black-and-white-banded antennae.