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Use Local Firewood To Help Protect Arkansas Forests From Invasive Species

LITTLE ROCK, AR – In recognition of October’s designation as the first-ever Firewood Awareness Month, the Arkansas Agriculture Department urges Arkansans to use firewood from within a 20-mile radius to help protect Arkansas trees and forest ecosystems from invasive pests and diseases.

“Buying local firewood from within a 20-mile radius is an important way that consumers can slow the spread of forest pests and protect our forests and natural areas. Some of our neighboring states have invasive pests and diseases such as the walnut twig beetle, Asian longhorned beetle, and thousand cankers disease that kill host trees and can spread when firewood is moved,” says Jake Bodart, Arkansas State Pest Survey Coordinator.

Firewood Awareness Month is a part of a nationwide effort between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and The Nature Conservancy to raise public awareness about firewood movement as a forest pest and disease pathway. Arkansans can use the following firewood use guidelines to help protect forests and natural areas:

- Buy local firewood within 20 miles of your destination, whether you are camping, hunting, vacationing with an open fire place, grilling, or any other activity that will involve burning wood.
- Buy or collect only the firewood you’ll need, and burn it all completely by the end of your stay.
- If you have already moved firewood, use it immediately. Do not take it home with you, and do not leave any excess firewood on site.
- Remember to follow Burn Bans, listed at www.arkfireinfo.org
- Residents can learn more at www.dontmovefirewood.org or,
- State and National Parks, teachers, and others can find additional resources for Firewood Awareness Month in the [Firewood Month Toolkit](#).

The Arkansas Agriculture Department, through the State Plant Board and the Arkansas Forestry Commission, actively works with federal partners at the United States Department of Agriculture APHIS and U.S. Forest Service to implement pest surveys, quarantines, biocontrol, and public outreach to combat invasive species. The gypsy moth, which causes damage to oak and hickory trees, was successfully eradicated in Arkansas in the early 1990s. An emerald ash borer quarantine is currently in place to slow the spread of the tree-killing beetle that attacks and kills ash trees.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Learn more at aad.arkansas.gov.

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The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

