



Hunters and Firewood: Buy It Where You Burn It

Release: November 6, 2019

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MADISON – Hunters, if the supply list for your trip up north this deer season includes firewood, cross it off right now. Instead, wait until you get there to buy it local, or pick up some certified firewood on the way.

That’s because it is sometimes illegal and always a bad idea to move firewood from county to county, unless it’s certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Firewood can carry pests and diseases in the form of gypsy moth egg masses, emerald ash borer larvae and the fungus that causes oak wilt. It could even harbor pests and diseases we have not yet detected in Wisconsin.

"Gypsy moth and emerald ash borer are two of the most destructive pests in North America," says Brian Kuhn, director of the Plant Industry Bureau in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. "Gypsy moth poses a broad threat, attacking hundreds of different tree and shrub species. Emerald ash borers attack only ash trees in Wisconsin, but ash provides wildlife habitat and other environmental benefits, lines the streets in many communities, and is one of our highest-value woods, accounting for many of our timber exports. It’s also culturally important to Native Americans.

“Along with providing habitat for whitetail deer, our northern forests provide many jobs, both in the timber industry and tourism. And tree cover protects the soil, preventing erosion and runoff to lakes and streams. So, it protects water quality and fish habitat, too.”

Hardwood firewood cannot be carried legally from counties quarantined for gypsy moth to non-quarantined areas. Fifty counties in Wisconsin are quarantined for gypsy moth. A map showing the quarantined counties is available online at gypsymoth.wi.gov.

Even though all of Wisconsin is under quarantine for emerald ash borer, we have not detected the insect in the majority of the state’s forests. Moving firewood to these areas could accelerate the spread of emerald ash borer to uninfested areas.

The Department of Natural Resources prohibits bringing firewood onto state lands from more than 10 miles away, and the U.S. Forest Service prohibits bringing firewood into the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest from more than 25 miles away.

The only exception to these prohibitions is for firewood that has been certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection as having been treated to destroy pests. Certified firewood is clearly labeled. A list of certified firewood dealers is available online at <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/CertifiedFirewoodDealers.pdf>. Certified firewood is also often available at convenience stores and other places selling firewood.

Remember:

- Buy firewood with the DATCP-certified label, *or*
- Gather or buy your firewood at your destination.
- Use all the firewood you obtain and don’t take any home with you, unless it is certified.

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