



Don't Move Firewood!

A Program of the Georgia Forestry Commission - Forest Health Staff
with support from Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites



Why is moving firewood a problem?

Tree-killing insects and diseases can hide in firewood. While these pests can't move far on their own, they can travel hundreds of miles when people move firewood. Pest infestations are a serious problem that destroy our forests and property values, and are very expensive to control.

Why are these invasive pests such a problem?

Many of the invasive pests introduced into our country often arrive in solid wood packing materials. These invasive pests come in with no natural or biological controls to keep them in check, and they thrive in their new environment. They invade their desired host, spread rapidly, and cause much more harm than our native insects and diseases. Many of these pests cannot be stopped once they are introduced into our ecosystem.

What are some of the pests threatening Georgia's forests?

Threats to Georgia's forests include the redbay ambrosia beetle, emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, siren woodwasp, Asian long-horned beetle and oak wilt disease. Most of these pests are already established in the northeastern portion of the United States and could spread into Georgia through the movement of firewood. The spread of the redbay ambrosia beetle (laurel wilt disease) and gypsy moth into Georgia campgrounds is suspected to have begun with the movement of firewood into the state.

What can you do?

- Use local firewood.
- If you brought firewood with you, burn all of it on-site before leaving.
- Don't move firewood outside of the county where it originated.
- When you visit Georgia's campgrounds again, please leave your firewood at home.



Where can I get more information?

Help keep Georgia's forests green and healthy. Be part of the solution, not the problem. For more information, contact the Georgia Forestry Commission toll free at 1-800-GATREES, or online at <http://www.gatrees.org/ForestManagement/ForestHealth.cfm>.

Don't Move Firewood – Questions and Answers

Why are non-native insects and diseases so much worse than native ones?

Our natural environment has a complex web of checks and balances that moderate native insect populations and plant diseases. Foreign insects and diseases introduced into this environment are often resistant to these natural controls and can spread unchecked, resulting in much greater harm to our forests than is experienced with our native pests.

My firewood has no insects, holes, burrows, sawdust, or other unusual looking stuff on it. Is it OK to transport it?

No. Even the experts can't always see a couple of pinhead-sized insect eggs or a few microscopic fungus spores in a pile of wood. These tiny threats are enough to start a chain of destruction in an entire ecosystem. Never assume wood that "looks safe" is OK to move - it is not possible for firewood to be visually inspected that closely.

If I burn all of my wood completely, is it OK to bring it from far away?

No. While this may seem reasonable, too many unknowns exist for this to be a safe practice. A small chip of bark containing invasive insect larvae may fall unnoticed to the ground. A sudden rainstorm could wash fungus spores off the wood, out of the back of your pickup, and into the campsite. Even if you intend to burn every piece of wood completely, you still need to make sure it is local wood. The risks are simply too great.

What do I do if I have already brought firewood with me?

Burn all of the firewood on site. If you have any firewood left over and you are not able to burn it, notify the park ranger.

Where can I get firewood if I don't bring it with me?

Many local convenience stores, grocery stores and building supply dealers sell firewood cut from nearby areas. Some state parks also have firewood on site for purchase.

Doesn't it cost me more for firewood if I purchase it locally rather than bring it with me?

The extra weight of hauling firewood will lower your gas mileage and raise your fuel expenses. A greater cost, however, would be introducing an exotic pest from your firewood that could result in the elimination of an entire tree species.

I only live in Georgia or close to my destination park; is it okay to bring firewood from my home in North Georgia?

No. Certain forest pests which inhabit specific parts of our state (or neighboring states) are not found in other regions. Thus, "short distance" movements can still have a significant, detrimental impact. This has been proven elsewhere in the United States with emerald ash borer and Asian longhorn beetles. It has also occurred in Georgia with redbay ambrosia beetles and gypsy moths.