

press release

# Winterthur is European City of the Trees 2016

## Successful control treatment of Asian Longhorned Beetle

The title European City of the Trees 2016 will be awarded to the Swiss city Winterthur in the Canton of Zurich by the European Arboricultural Council (EAC) on Friday, 3rd June 2016. A very accurately planned and finally successful control treatment of the Asian Longhorned Beetle, detected for the first time in 2012, made a big impression on tree experts from all over Europe. Therefore, the EAC accepted the proposal of Bund Schweizer Baumpfleger (BSB) that the former industrial city with its approximately 110.000 inhabitants should receive the award.

In summer 2012, the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) appeared for the first time along Sulzer Allee and within a 300 metre radius in Winterthur's district of Neuhegi. The beetle is an extremely dangerous pest because it has no natural enemies in Europe and infests most of the deciduous trees, particularly maple, poplar, horse chestnut, birch, platanus and beech. The trees die or drop whole branches that endanger passersby. As a result, the beetle is fought in Winterthur with the aim of complete eradication. This requires the prevention of further beetles being introduced and that they neither spread nor reproduce.

After the first infestations were found, the city nursery, the forest management and civil protection services systematically and extensively searched for more beetles in trees. **Apart from human eyes the noses of especially trained dogs went into action. The tracking dogs rendered us phenomenal services, Beat Kunz, the director of City Green Winterthur, recalls.** Depending on the weather, the dogs are capable of smelling the beetles for several hours a day before they need a rest. Since it was hardly possible to detect all beetles during one search operation, a long-term monitoring of the infested area took place. In the so-called focal zone all trees, including those on private properties, have been controlled twice a year until this day. The City Nursery put up corresponding signs and set up a telephone hotline for citizens to report findings.

If a tree is infested with ALB, it has to be felled immediately and, most of all, professionally disposed of. For this, the City of Winterthur has installed a collection point where the removed branch material is chopped and disposed of. The trees of Sulzer Allee have in the meantime been fully replaced.

The main reason why the ALB is dangerous is its capability to cause the death of trees partly or completely within the shortest time. The beetle lays its eggs underneath the bark where these, at first, are invisible to the naked eye. Within a time span of about two years the larva develops and eats its way through the wood. During this period the timber strength may

already be at risk, branches break off suddenly, thus becoming a potential danger for people passing by. At the end of its cycle the beetle makes a hole of approximately 1 cm and hatches out of the tree.

The ECOT awarding ceremony takes place on Friday, 03/06/2016, at around 3 pm in Meeting Room 3 of Zurich Youth Hostel, Mutschellenstrasse 114. The prize will be handed over to Beat Kunz by Relo Ligi, head of the green department of Tallinn, the previous winning city.



Joël Sorg, Squadron Leader Daniel Hagemeier, Monika Hagemeier, Norma Kleiber, Carmelo Colletti