



Firewood Program

**Don't Let GSOB Bug You!**

## **Goldspotted Oak Borer Project**

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Dear Oak Firewood Vendor,

**The purpose of this letter is to alert you to a problem involving firewood from coast live oak, canyon live oak, and California black oak trees in San Diego County.**

Your help is needed! An exotic pest, a beetle called the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB; *Agrilus coxalis*), is attacking and killing oak trees in the rural communities of Alpine, Descanso, Campo, Crest, Cuyamaca, Guatay, Jamul, Julian, Laguna, Lake Henshaw, Pine Valley, Santa Ysabel, Ramona, and Warner Springs. If this beetle spreads to other areas, it has potential to kill over 95% of woodland oaks in less than 10 years. Moreover, it is important to know that the beetle can survive for up to a year in cut firewood. If the beetle is inside the oak firewood, then it is highly possible to transport this pest long distances from the area of infestation of San Diego County to other oak woodland areas. Moving GSOB infested oak firewood into un-infested areas with oaks will likely lead to spreading the beetle and causing significant oak tree mortality. This is where we need your help!

In order to protect your product, clientele and the oak trees, it's critical that you understand the nature of the outbreak and the consequences of bringing GSOB-infested wood into your market area. There are no known treatments to eradicate GSOB once it becomes established, and a GSOB outbreak is likely to kill many of the coast live oak and black oaks in your area. There are currently no known ways to protect oak trees from GSOB attack.

Pupae and larvae can survive in the bark for months after oak trees are cut down, creating an ideal mechanism for GSOB transport to new areas. Adults lay eggs on oak tree trunks in the summer; larvae hatch and then bore into the margin between the bark and sapwood to feed. They move back to the outer-bark to pupate in the late spring of the next year, and the emerging adults bore out of the bark in the summer and begin the cycle again.

**[www.gsob.org](http://www.gsob.org)**



What can be done if you have already purchased oak firewood from the area of infestation? First, consider stripping or removing the bark from the firewood and placing the bark into a 3-ml thick plastic bag or a bag made from window screen to reduce the danger of GSOB escaping into adjacent oaks. Another possible option is to burn the removed bark as soon as possible. However, first check with the local fire department and air quality agencies to determine if burning is permitted and to obtain the necessary permits. The last method, which is likely the least effective, is to stack the oak firewood in a sunny location and cover it with 6-ml clear UV-resistant plastic sheeting, forming a *tight seal* over the pile to keep beetles from escaping and to heat the wood in an effort to kill the beetles. Keep the wood covered from at least March until November.

As a firewood distributor, before you buy or import oak firewood from the GSOB infestation area, carefully consider the consequences of a GSOB outbreak. Coast live oaks are the primary shade tree in many parks, they add thousands of dollars to real estate values, and are a defining element of many communities. The GSOB outbreak could cost your community millions of dollars. Your odds of causing a local loss of oak trees are dramatically reduced if you buy oak firewood from reputable sources outside of the area of GSOB infestation.

If you decide to import oak firewood from GSOB infested areas, you should consider buying wood that has been seasoned for at least a year before it is transported. Seasoning over the summer increases the likelihood that the adult GSOB beetles have abandoned the firewood before it is moved.

Public concern over GSOB is going to increase over the next year; and we're hoping that this initial contact will give you time to prepare your business response. For more information on GSOB, visit [www.gsob.org](http://www.gsob.org) or call the County of San Diego Entomology Department at (858) 694-3897. If you need help identifying GSOB in your firewood, contact the University of California Cooperative Extension (Tara Piraneo, Kevin Turner or Tom Scott) at 951-827-5115.

Thank you for your cooperation.