



Rustic Log Furniture Could Harbor Pests, DATCP Cautions

Release Date: 1/17/17

Contact: Donna Gilson
608-224-5130, donna.gilson@wi.gov
Bill Cosh, Communications Director
608-224-5020, William2.Cosh@wi.gov

Editors note: If you would like photos of the velvet longhorned beetle, please go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/widatcp>.

MADISON – The popular rustic log furniture could harbor exotic insect pests, state officials warn, so they're asking consumers to be on the lookout, both for their own protection and that of Wisconsin's forests.

"We had two incidents in 2016 of imported 'rustic' furniture being infested with insects. In both cases, the furniture was imported from China, and the insects were wood-boring beetles native to China. If these insects were to escape into the environment, they could pose a real threat to our forests, crops and wood products industries," said Brian Kuhn, director of the Plant Industry Bureau in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

"In one of these cases, the brown fir longhorned beetle was found in rustic pine log furniture, and in the other case, the velvet longhorned beetle was discovered in rustic hickory log furniture that still had bark on it. In both cases, the furniture was imported into the U.S. and sold in many states, including Minnesota and Wisconsin. We worked with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to gather as much of the furniture as we could, and stop any ongoing sales."

Buyers generally found and reported the infestations when they noticed sawdust around the furniture.

Some of the furniture from those two cases could still be in consumers' homes, Kuhn noted, and the insects could survive in it for two years or longer. DATCP is working with the USDA to tighten efforts to exclude these products before they enter the United States, he said.

Like the non-native emerald ash borer that many Wisconsin residents may know, the immature worm-like larval life stage of these beetles feeds under the bark and causes damage, and emerges as adults to lay eggs on the bark. The eggs hatch, and the new larvae burrow under the bark to complete their life cycle.

If you are shopping for this imported rustic furniture or have bought any of it in the past two years, Kuhn encourages you to look for these signs of infestation:

- Sawdust around the furniture, which suggests that insects are gnawing at the wood
- Exit holes, or small tunnels that insects make as they burrow out from under the bark
- Wood damage, such as loose bark or visible trails on the wood made by feeding larvae.

If you suspect that rustic furniture in your home is infested, contact DATCP by emailing shahla.werner@wi.gov or calling (608)224-4573.

Do not move it outdoors where the insects could spread, or spray it with insect spray that could harm your family and will not kill the insects under the bark.

###

Find more DATCP news at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/NewsReleases.aspx, facebook.com/widatcp, and twitter.com/widatcp.