

DATCP: Camping this summer? Leave firewood at home

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MADISON - As you kick off your summer camping and cabin season this Memorial Day weekend, don't be the one who brings emerald ash borer, gypsy moth or other pests and diseases to new homes in Wisconsin.

"Buy it where you burn it," says Brian Kuhn, director of the Plant Industry Bureau in the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. "State parks require that firewood be brought from no more than 10 miles away. National forests require it to be purchased within 25 miles. Many private campgrounds prohibit bringing in firewood at all. And if you live in a county that's under quarantine for gypsy moth, it's actually illegal to take firewood to a non-quarantine county. The only exception to these regulations is when you buy firewood marked with the DATCP certification."

While the entire state of Wisconsin is now quarantined for emerald ash borer, there are still large areas where EAB has not been found. Slowing the spread of both gypsy moth and EAB to these areas can give communities and property owners time to prepare, by treating high-value trees or planting other species, and spreading costs over time. But it's not only EAB and gypsy moth that threaten Wisconsin's forests. Oak wilt and other pests and diseases can also be spread on firewood.

"It's never a good idea to move firewood," Kuhn says. "We strongly advise against it. You can't just look at wood and see pests. They may be inside of it, or they may be microscopic pathogens. In the balance of things, the health of our North Woods - and all the jobs and wildlife that depend on it - is worth spending a few dollars to buy firewood instead of hauling it from home."

For more information about EAB and gypsy moth and the quarantines aimed at slowing their spread, go to emeraldashborer.wi.gov and gypsymoth.wi.gov.