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Commissioner

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Department of  
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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## Quarantine on Mayday and Chokecherry Trees Established

**(Palmer, AK)** – The Director of the Division of Agriculture signed a quarantine order effective Sept. 1, 2025 to stop the importation, transport, and sale of *Prunus padus* (commonly known as European Bird Cherry tree or Mayday tree) and *Prunus virginiana* (commonly known as the Canada Red or Chokecherry tree). In many parts of the state, these species are creating invasive monocultures and displacing native trees, shrubs, and forbs.

These two types of trees have invaded riparian zones along creeks and native forests throughout the state, including the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and the City and Borough of Juneau.

“This quarantine prohibits the importation, transport, and sale within the state of these two trees and their parts,” said **Bryan Scoresby, Director of the Division of Agriculture**. “Many agencies continue to pursue control measures with the goal of eliminating these invasive trees. With this quarantine, the flow of trees into Alaska will stop, making this goal more attainable.”

*Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana* can quickly take over the understory of forests where native plants once grew, displacing vegetation that fish and wildlife rely on for forage. These species have been documented growing along anadromous creeks and streams, which significantly reduces insect biomass, thus reducing food sources for juvenile salmonids. These species contain a cyanogenic glycoside that is toxic to ruminant animals such as moose when eaten. By displacing native vegetation that fish and wildlife rely on forage, these two invasive *Prunus* species can outcompete native species, significantly reducing the quality of important prime winter forage for Alaskan moose.

Recently, fungal disease “Black Knot” (*Apiosporina morbosa*) was found on the UAA campus attacking *Prunus padus* trees. This fungus threatens the cultivated fruit tree industry, namely plum and cherry trees prized for their edible fruits. Invasive *Prunus* are a potential spreader of this disease, and their removal helps reduce the spread of Black Knot to other parts of the state.

The Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) has funded grants totaling over \$400,000 in the last five years for control measures in the five largest boroughs of the state. DOF has pursued an aggressive public outreach and education campaign, including public meetings, media interviews, and radio advertising to educate the public on the threat invasive *Prunus* species poses to the ecosystems of Alaska. An additional \$250,000 has been directed towards ongoing projects to control invasive *Prunus* species.

*The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.*

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