Forest Health Highlights
Connecticut 2020

Insects

Spotted Lanternfly

Spotted lanternfly was found in lower Fairfield County in September 2020. Active populations (males, gravid females, and egg masses) were found at several locations. Interceptions of individual insects, both dead and alive, occurred several times in other areas of the state. The populations are under delimitation, and likely areas of infestation are being monitored. Areas with high numbers of favorite hosts, such as tree of heaven and maple, will be used as trapping locations in 2021. Considerable outreach efforts, through print and social media, are underway and ongoing.

Tropical Storm Isaias

Isaias caused considerable damage to the forest in August 2020. In addition to structural damage (broken limbs and toppled trees), damage due to wind-blown salt water, from Long Island Sound, was considerable. Salt damage was evident up to 50 miles inland. On August 27, an EF-1 tornado caused damage in New Haven County.

Emerald ash borer

Emerald ash borer was found in New Haven County in July 2012, in a colony of *Cerceris* wasps. Since then, the insect has been found in all eight counties of the state. Trapping was discontinued as CT became part of the contiguous EAB quarantine when the federal quarantine was expanded to include the entire state. There is considerable mortality due to EAB in the western two thirds of the state, especially in urban and street trees.

Gypsy Moth

In November and December 2019, a gypsy moth egg mass survey was conducted in 80-95% favorable host sites on a 7-mile grid (102 sites) throughout Connecticut. Egg mass counts were low, due to the reduced population of adult gypsy moths in summer of 2019. Mortality due to drought and defoliation became evident in 2018, with dead trees concentrated in areas of high **gypsy moth** defoliation in previous years.

Winter moth

Parasitoids of **winter moth** have been released in New London County, and their effectiveness in reducing populations is being seen. There were many complaints of tree and shrub damage due to fall webworm, but the long-term consequences of feeding by this insect are minimal.

Hemlock woolly adelgid and Elongate hemlock scale

Both insects have been present in CT for many years and continue to cause patchy damage and decline among the remaining population of hemlocks. **Elongate hemlock scale** probably is a more significant damage agent than previously thought. **Circular scale** is found sporadically.

Black oak gall wasp

Black oak gall wasp or the crypt gall wasp, was detected on black oak in New London County in 2014. This insect has been reported to cause mortality on black and other related oaks, especially in coastal areas such as Cape Cod. Since the detection of this insect, monitoring of oaks in the coastal reserves will be scrutinized.

Southern pine beetle

Southern pine beetle was recently detected in CT, on red pine, white pine, Scots pine, pitch pine, and Norway spruce, in New Haven, Litchfield, and New London Counties. Some trees were killed by the beetle and the accompanying fungal infection.

Other insects

Asian longhorned beetle was not found in 2020. **Sirex wood wasp** is consistently detected as by-catch in other trapping efforts. Other trapping targets affecting forest trees were the **oak processionary moth**, **oak ambrosia beetle, pear leaf blister moth,** and **velvet longhorned beetle**. One **Dendrolimus** was found in a trap. Visual surveys were conducted for **Japanese oak wilt**, **citrus longhorned beetle**, and **spotted lanternfly**. **Brown marmorated stink bug** causes sporadic damage to garden and fruit crops, and is increasingly becoming an indoor pest, especially in the late summer and autumn, when the insects move into homes, in search of an overwintering site. **Western conifer seed bugs**, a look-alike of the **Asian longhorned beetle**, also are frequently reported as indoor pests in the autumn, as they seek overwintering sites.

Diseases

Beech bark disease

Is present statewide and causes mortality on stressed trees.

Thousand Cankers Disease

Due to the limited number of walnut in CT, there is no monitoring program for **Thousand Cankers Disease**, even though this disease is the subject of a number of quarantine regulations for many states.

Oak wilt

Monitoring of **Oak wilt** began in CY 2019. Testing of suspect samples will be conducted at the Experiment Station; there is no formal sampling plan for the disease.

Beech leaf disease

Beech leaf disease, caused by the foliar nematode *Litylenchus crenatae*, was confirmed in Fairfield County in summer of 2019, and has since been confirmed in seven of eight counties. Affected areas are widely scattered, but damage is considerable in those areas. Surveys are underway to determine the extent of the disease.

Hardwood anthracnose

Late in the season, **hardwood anthracnose** caused browning and defoliation of many species, especially maples, in the western counties of CT. Heavy seed set in maples caused canopy discoloration in some areas of Litchfield county in late summer.

Damage from wind-blown salt water during TS Isaias, August 2020. Photo by V. L. Smith, CAES

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