Georgia Forestry Commission
Forest Health Highlights

October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017

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Summary:

The Forest Health Management Section provides unbiased forest health advice to landowners and forestry professionals across Georgia. Of Georgia's 37 million acres of land area, 98% of Georgia's 24.8 million acres is forest land under private ownership. Of this 24.8 million acres, 24.4 million acres is timberland available for commercial use - more than any other state in the nation.
http://www.gatrees.org/resources/publications/GeorgiaForestFacts.pdf

In 2017, Georgia Forestry Commission foresters incorporated insect, disease, or invasive species advise in 732 management cases involving 30,052 acres, and 173 Stewardship and Tree Farm cases with a total impact of 50,921 acres. Statewide, forest health personnel provided training to 3.491 Georgia citizens during 66 training sessions with foresters, resource managers, loggers, nurserymen, regulatory agencies, and landowners across Georgia.

We strive to create cooperative partnerships meeting the needs of all landowners and forestry professionals throughout the state.

Special notes of interest:

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was discovered in July 2013, and trapping data shows it is now found in 23 counties: **Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fannin, Fayette, Fulton, Gilmer, Gwinnett, Habersham, Henry, Murray, Newton, Rabun, Rockdale, Union, Walton, White, and Whitfield Counties**. No new counties were detected in 2017 for the presence of EAB. In November 2017 the regional Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine was increased to a statewide quarantine. A map of the quarantine area and a list of the counties positive for EAB can be found here: Postive EAB Counties in Georgia and Quarantine Area

Asian Gypsy Moth

On September 25, 2015, a single, adult male Asian gypsy moth was identified in a trap directly outside the Port of Savannah. This federally regulated Asian gypsy moth initiated an intense systematic grid survey in 2016 to determine if this moth was a single capture or if additional Asian gypsy moths are present. At the completion of the 2017 trapping survey, no additional Asian gypsy moths had been detected in Georgia.

Severe Weather Damage

Extreme weather events were noted in 2016/17, with 43 separate tornado events and two hurricanes impacting timber resources across Georgia.

Tornado Damage

Southwest Georgia, near Albany, received the primary tornado impacts with 43 separate tornado tracts and 16 lives lost due to catastrophic weather damage. Georgia Forestry Commission foresters evaluated 11 counties (Dougherty, Worth, Turner, Wilcox, Thomas, Brooks, Cook, Berrien, Clay, Calhoun, and Randolph) for tornado damage and developed estimates for overall timber damage. There were approximately 33,200 rural woodland acres damaged, with all the directly impacted areas being classified as severe to catastrophic damage. The extent of damage required salvage operations to recoup whatever value possible from the stand. Recommendations to conduct a complete harvest were customarily made for widespread damage.

Hurricane Damage

During the 2016/17, Georgia was impacted by two hurricanes; Hurricane Matthew, October 8-9, 2016 and Hurricane Irma, September 11-12, 2017. Hurricane Matthew developed as a wind event, and Hurricane Irma produced far more flooding, which included storm surge events.

The eyewall of Hurricane Matthew remained 25 miles offshore along Georgia's coastline, with hurricane wind gusts felt 50 miles inland, and 90 miles per hour winds in Savannah and Tybee Island, Georgia. Rural forested stands most impacted had been heavily thinned during the previous year. 2,229, 960 acres of rural forest was evaluated for damage across southeast Georgia. In the majority of the timber evaluation areas, no management activity was required to maintain a healthy, viable forest. However, on 279,000 acres, landowners were advised to consider using a salvage thinning or a clear-cut operation for optimal forest management.

Hurricane Irma unleashed strong wind gusts across most of Georgia, including the City of Atlanta, and storm-surge flooding along coastal Georgia. Severe flooding was experienced in Saint Mary's, Brunswick, Savannah, and Tybee Island. The timber impact area included all of Georgia and more than 8,000,000 acres of rural forest land, which sustained varying levels of damage. 430,000 acres of rural forest land was evaluated with severe to catastrophic damage. Again, management advice given to landowners to consider using a salvage thinning or a clear-cut operation to mitigate damage and maintain healthy, viable forests across Georgia.

On all timber damage assessments, landowners are encouraged to use the services of a professional forester to help make the best decision for their situation.

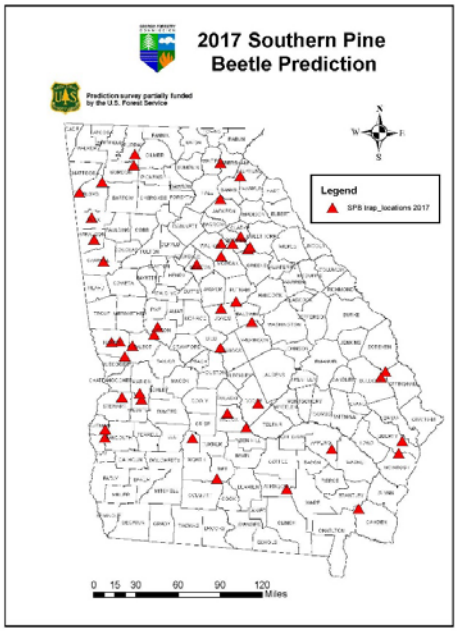
Wildfire Damage, Extreme Drought

A lightning-caused wildfire began in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge on April 6, 2017, and the effects of long term drought and extreme fire weather conditions resulted in limited control. The fire quickly spread across the swamp, and by May 31, 2017 the West Mims Fire had consumed 145,315 acres (113,170 acres of federally owned land and 32,145 acres on private and industrial property). On the 32,000 acres of privately owned lands, a mortality rating of approximately 75-80% was applied to this fire. This "severe" rating showed that these stands had extreme damage, and a significant portion of the trees were already dead or were not likely to survive the following growing season. The estimated loss on private and industrial lands was **$38,187,291**.

Pine Beetle Pheromone Trapping / Pine Beetle Aerial Survey / Ips Engraver Beetle Outbreak:

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) participates annually in the southern pine beetle prediction trapping program, and for the first time, in 2017, the new SPB Prediction Trapping protocol set up by

Texas A&M was followed. This year, three lures were used, Frontalin, Sirex and the endo-brevicomin flexlure, and the traps were set approximately two weeks earlier than in previous seasons. Changing these two factors in one season lead to differences interpreting trap results, with two traps having unusually large numbers of SPB early in the trap season. 45 traps were placed across the state and results were not returned until August. With the very late return of prediction results, landowner reports and aerial surveys were the main predictor of SPB activity in 2017, with beetle activity beginning in early July.



2017 Pine Beetle Prediction Trap Locations

Landowner calls began in July and Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) activity was concentrated in the northwest portion of the state. From May 19- September 7, GFC employees flew 13,300 miles of aerial surveys with visual observations on 15,500,000 acres (approximately 40% survey). From these surveys, 237 SPB spots were detected on approximately 325 acres of pine timber was lost. The majority of these spots (95%) were less than five acres in size, but active SPB was found during field checks.

Three counties in northwest Georgia, mainly in Paulding, Bartow and Cherokee Counties, comprised the majority of all Southern Pine Beetle found in Georgia in 2017.

On November 8, 2016 Paul Merten, USDA Forest Service reported 139 Southern Pine Beetle infestations in Jasper, Putnam, and Jones Counties on the Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forests and surrounding private landowners. The Forest Health staff in north and central Georgia was notified of this possible outbreak. Ground and aerial surveys began on November 9, 2016 with the Georgia Forestry Commission Air Operations section working in cooperation with the Forest Health staff. Both USDA Forester Service and Georgia Forestry Commission personnel surveyed the areas to determine the extent of damage and cause of the outbreak.

On November 15, 2016, it was determined that this outbreak is due to the severe drought conditions in north and central Georgia, with an estimated 300 infestations across the National Forest. Many of the spots are ¼ acre or less, but there are multiple spots in the same area. Both the Georgia Forestry Commission and the USDA Forest Service determined the insect causing this outbreak to be Ips Engraver Beetle (*Ips avulsus)*, the small Ips that normally hit the top of the tree, and both agencies are convinced this outbreak is not Southern Pine beetle.

Unprecedented outbreaks of Ips engraver beetles occurred as the U.S. Drought Monitor rose to severe and extreme drought levels across all of north Georgia, from the fall line into our neighboring states of Alabama and Tennessee. On November 29, 2016, drought index levels reached extreme drought conditions and more than 60% of the State of Georgia was under a severe to extreme drought condition. This prolonged drought and extreme temperatures caused long-term damage to both hardwoods and pines, and damage is expected for years in the future. Immediate damage from this drought was evidenced by dying tree tops, brown leaves and dropping needles. Long-term damage to root systems is likely. During the next two to three years, we expect to see both hardwoods and pines dying due to root damage suffered during this drought.

Aerial surveys identified over 278 Ips infestations on private lands in central Georgia, with spots ranging from five to 60 acres. During the flights, more than 5,000 small spots (.25 acre or less) were noted in central Georgia. It is estimated that more than 6,500 acres of timber was lost to this unprecedented Ips engraver beetle outbreak. In December 2016 and January 2017, we received rain across the state, but the U.S. Drought Monitor still showed all of north Georgia, above the fall line, in severe to extreme drought and temperatures remained above normal.

Once soil moisture increased and the drought index decreased, there was a reduction in the number of Ips infestations across the region. Even after drought conditions eased, compromised root systems continue to cause forest health issues. The Georgia Forestry Commission recommended to landowners that any management activity that produces additional stress in these stands across northern and central Georgia increases the risk of insect and disease activity. Taking these conditions into account, the Georgia Forestry Commission recommended landowners and consultants be very cautious when planning thinning and prescribed burn operations. The addition of stress due to thinning, accumulation of logging debris, prescribed burning, and damage to residual trees was a concern that Ips beetles could be attracted to stands that have already suffered from severe drought, root damage, and beetle damage.

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention and Restoration Grant Report (2003-2016):

The US Forest Service has provided federal grants in this program area for 15 consecutive years. These grants were primarily utilized for direct cost share payments to Georgia landowners to implement prevention practices to treat high risk stands and forest restoration practices. Of these grants totaling $11.88 million, $7.185 million has been obligated towards direct landowner payments under cost share practices treating over 300,500 acres.

Southern pine beetle cost share funds for 2017 were allocated to southern pine beetle prevention practices exclusively. Landowner interest was great, and the funds were assigned in a period of weeks. Prescribed burning and pine release operations assisted landowners in producing vigorous growing and healthy pine stands to prevent southern pine beetle outbreaks. During federal fiscal year 2017, GFC foresters serviced 573 contracts covering 36,976 acres.

Heterobasidion root disease (Formerly known as annosus root disease):

Identification of widespread Heterobasidion root disease began in 2005 with widespread mortality in recently thinned pine plantations. The incidence of Heterobasidion root disease has declined with landowner education programs, recognition of high hazard sites, proper tree species selection, and improvements in application products and techniques to combat this disease.

In October 2014, it was announced Sporax® would no longer be produced, leaving only a water-soluble borate powder, such as Cellu-Treat® (disodium octaborate tetrahydrate) to treat the disease. The time constraint was the one drawback to this recommendation. Employing labor to follow the thinning crews and safety concerns about being in close proximity to the harvesting operation were the two major obstacles to completing the treatment within the 24-hour window.

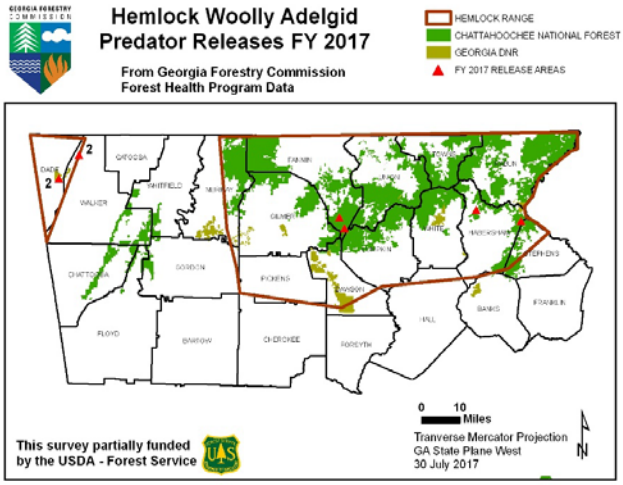
Michelle Cram, Plant Pathologist, USDA Forest Service, worked diligently to insure labeling of *Phlebiopsis gigantea* for control of annosus root disease. On October 6, 2016, the label for Rotstop was approved in the United States. This new label provides an additional tool to control Heterobasidion root disease, and removes the rigid time constraint of 24 hour treatments.

The Heterobasidion Root Disease brochure can be found at: http://gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/annosum-root-disease/HRDBrochure.pdf

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid:

Hemlock woolly adelgid has spread throughout the entire natural range of hemlock in Georgia. Surveys focused on assessing predator beetle release areas and locating suitable foliage for predator beetle rearing labs.

The Georgia Forestry Commission provided assistance to predator beetle rearing labs at the University of Georgia, University of North Georgia, and Young Harris College. Activities included scouting for and collecting foliage for rearing, scouting and preparing beetle release locations, and releasing beetles. In 2017, 16 sites were scouting and 8 predator beetle release areas were selecting in the Chattahoochee National Forest, Georgia State Parks, and secure land trust property. Throughout the year the GFC conducted 19 predator beetle releases on these sites. *Laricobius nigrinus* was released at seven sites. *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* was released at three of the sites and *Scymnus coniferarum* at one site. Six of these release areas represent excellent potential for field insectary sites and will continue to be a major focus in FY2018. The GFC conducted the first release in a new release area and potential field insectary site in Cloudland Canyon State Park.



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Predator Release Sites

The GFC worked through the summer with the University of North Georgia Ecological Protection Lab to consolidate, reconcile and re-format all predator release data from four rearing labs from 2004 to 2017. Preparation of this data for entry into the National HWA Predator Database continues in FY2018.

Our goal is to develop partnerships with private land trusts, non-profit organizations, and other state agencies, to help survey and protect hemlocks across north Georgia. This advisory capacity provides freedom to work across private and state lands, helping volunteers with chemical treatment of thousands of trees, improves communication for surveying and protecting hemlocks through identification of current and future predator beetle release areas, and insures coordination of predator releases with chemical treatment.

Private landowners are offered a soil injector loan program which is extremely popular with homeowners. 16 injectors are available to landowners, including 10 kioritz injectors and six backpack injectors available in the following counties: Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Rabun, Union and Walker.

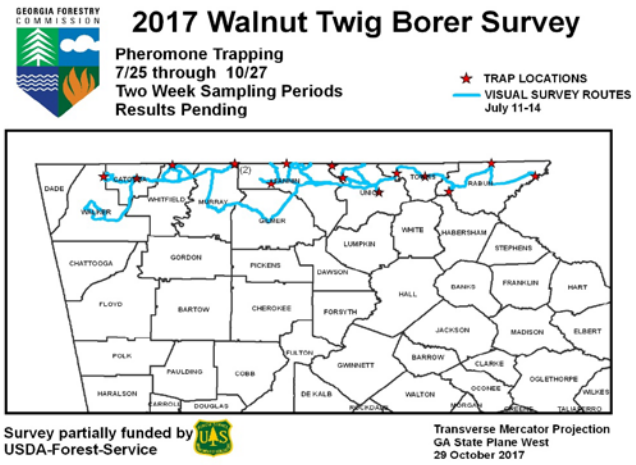
The GFC public website postings are continuously updated in an effort to relay this information.
http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/hemlock-woolly-adelgid/

Thousand Cankers Disease:

This year marks the sixth year of pheromone trapping for walnut twig beetle (Pityophthorus juglandis) and trapping continued with 15 locations, focusing closely on the counties sharing boundaries with Tennessee and North Carolina.

All of the sites have trees with some degree of die-back. Five sites were in the Chattahoochee National Forest, one on state property, one on Tennessee Valley Authority land, one on National Park, one on municipal property and six on private property. Two new locations were used in 2017, where traps were moved closer to the Georgia border or to sites showing suspicious die-back.

Results for all 2017 sampling periods are negative and no suspected thousand cankers disease has been found in Georgia.



Walnut Twig Borer Survey Sites

Sudden Oak Death:

This marks the 13th year for sudden oak death early detection program surveys, with 10 north Georgia watersheds chosen to monitor for the presence of the pathogen *Phytopthora ramorum.* Sampling targeted watersheds that include Georgia's past positive nursery sites and watersheds with abundant new residential development in the metro Atlanta area.

In 2017, special focus was placed on watersheds in the east and northeast metro Atlanta area and two watersheds in northeast Georgia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Six new early detection watersheds that have had no early detection sampling to date were selected. Four early detection watersheds are being revisited. They were last sampled in 2013 or earlier, and are adjacent to past positive watersheds.

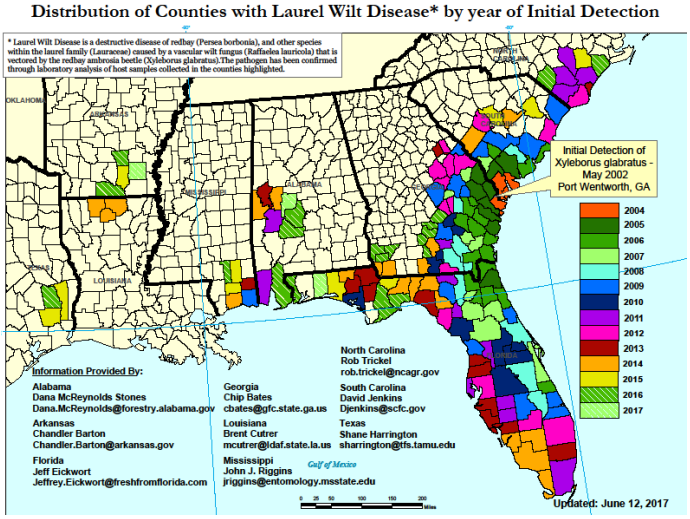
No *Phytopthora ramorum* has been identified in samples collected for 2017.

Laurel Wilt Disease:

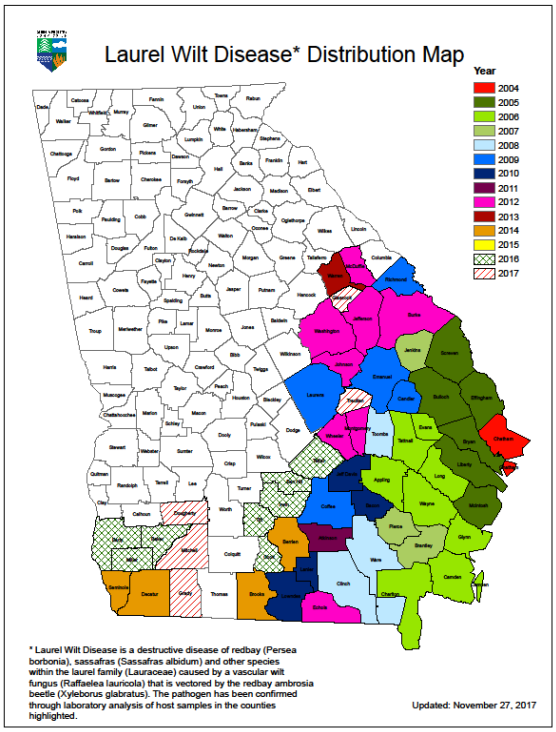
Laurel wilt disease was introduced at the Port of Savannah in solid wood packing material near Garden City, GA in 2002 and spread rapidly in Georgia and South Carolina GA by 2004. Since then, the disease spread throughout Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and is now killing redbay and sassafras in

the coastal plain of North Carolina. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas have documented infestations.

The spread of this disease has been tracked since 2005 with quarterly updates to the USDA Forest Service Southern Region web site under Forest and Grassland Health Spot Lights.



Laurel wilt disease is confirmed in 54 counties in Georgia, with new county detections, in central and southwestern Georgia, in redbay and sassafras. Positive detections were made in Dougherty, Glascock, Grady, Mitchell, and Treutlen counties during the winter and summer of 2017. Surveys will continue in southwest Georgia during the spring of 2018, and efforts will be made to confirm new infestations near the border of Georgia and South Carolina.



The Georgia Forestry Commission continues to document the spread of this nonnative invasive insects and training continues to prepare foresters to monitor the movement of this pest across the United

States and possibly Mexico. Training emphasizes the importance of restricting movement of materials that have the potential to spread forest pests.

Additional information on LWD can be found at the Georgia Forestry Commission home page: http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/diseases/index.cfm, and the USDA Forest Service Laurel Wilt website: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/forest-grasslandhealth

Invasive Weeds:

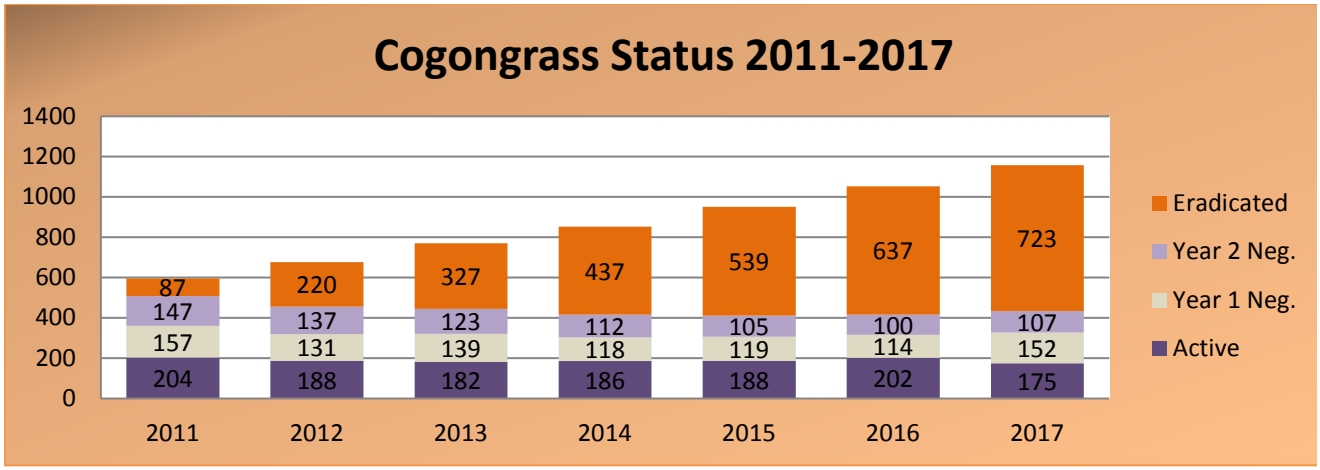
Cogongrass

Although many invasive plants cause problems within Georgia, the majority of our efforts have focused on cogongrass.

The GFC spearheads the cogongrass "Task Force" which is 23 state, federal and private partners that established the entire state of Georgia as a Cooperative Weed Management Area for cogongrass in May 2008. The combined effort of this group has had far reaching impacts in educating the public about cogongrass as well as helping to locate all infested sites. The education efforts has paid dividends and initial cogongrass reports are being filed from private landowners, industry foresters, and some logging operations. Forest health training was provided on 87 occasions with 35,289 attendees being reached.

92 new cogongrass infestation sites were reported and treated during 2017, which is a slight increase in new detections over the past three years. 60 Georgia counties have now identified cogongrass infestations involving 1157 sites across 296 acres. Screven County, located in southeast Georgia along the South Carolina border, was the only new county in which cogongrass was detected in 2017.

Most infestations in Georgia are approximately a quarter acre in size and all known sites have been treated at least once. Approximately 86% of all known sites are being reported as negative for cogongrass, and 723 sites have been declared eradicated.



The table above displays the number of cogongrass spots in each category annually from 2011-2017

It is clear that the cogongrass epicenter in Georgia is located in the southwest corner of the state. The majority of all new detections over the past few years have been in this region.

Herbicide treatments have been effective with the majority of all sites now being controlled within two-three growing seasons.

An information newsletter is posted semi-annually and is e-mailed to landowners and partners across the Southeast.

The Georgia Forestry Commission web site provides more cogongrass information. Connect to the link: http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/cogongrass/index.cfm to view cogongrass information such as:

- ***Cogongrass in Georgia update***
- ***Known cogongrass sites in Georgia map***
- ***Cogongrass Density map***
- ***Cogongrass percent inactive map***
- ***Cogongrass in Georgia winter 2017 newsletter***
- ***Cogongrass in Georgia spring 2017 newsletter***

Weeds Report:

Chinese privet

The Forest Inventory and Analysis survey for 2017 shows trends in the number of acres infested with nonnative privet across Georgia. In the current survey there are 1,115,920 acres infested with Chinese privet, compared to the previous survey (2015) with 637,211 acres. We continue to follow these trends through the "Dirty Dozen" list of invasive plants.

Controlling Chinese privet has proven simple using foliar applications of glyphosate (4 -7%), applied between October and January. This method has proven effective, with expectations of a nearly 100% kill by April of the following year.

Chinese tallowtree

Chinese tallowtree is native to China and Japan and was introduced in The United States during the late 1700's. Each tree has the potential to produce thousands of seeds annually and these seeds are dispersed primarily by birds and flooding in riparian areas. Chinese tallowtree infests a total of 31,780 acres in Georgia.

Brazilian Pepper (Schinus terebinthifolius)

Brazilian pepper is native of South America and was introduced into Florida in mid-1800 as an ornamental plant. It was thought Brazilian Pepper could not establish in Georgia due to the colder temperatures, but a small infestation was identified in the summer of 2014.

Brazilian peppertree monitoring continues for a third year along the causeway leading to Jekyll Island, Georgia, where it was discovered and treated on June 25, 2014. Three different site evaluations were conducted along the causeway in 2017, and each visit revealed no Brazilian peppertree. Brazilian peppertree has not been found for three consecutive years and is considered eradicated, but annual inspections by GFC county personnel will continue to insure total eradication.

Dirty Dozen List of Invasive Weeds:

2017 is our seventh year working with The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) team developing data providing a defendable ranking of invasive plants. Since 2009 the "Targeted Watch List "of nonnative invasive plants did not change from year to year, and we are seeing trends in the total acres of our twelve worst nonnative invasive plant species that aggressively compete with and displacing native communities across Georgia.

The "Dirty Dozen List" continues to be a valuable tool in combating nonnative invasive weeds in Georgia.

FOREST HEALTH PROGRAM

GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION

Top Twelve Nonnative Invasive Plants

2017 Dirty Dozen List

Rank	Species	2015	2013	2011	2009
1	Non-native privet	1,115,920	637,211	726,148	637,916
2	Nepalese browntop	192,070	102,722	111,836	70,001
3	Chinaberry	82,220	53,165	67,534	59,872
4	Non-native lespedeza	67,260	36,470	41,069	40,630
5	Japanese climbing fern	35,900	21,152	20,563	16,271
6	Kudzu	35,020	34,625	42,158	35,981
7	Non-native olive	33,310	18,765	18,506	17,090
8	Chinese tallowtree	31,780	13,876	15,348	11,314
9	Mimosa	30,750	11,318	18,344	15,420
10	Wisteria	15,560	6,571	10,082	7,437
11	Exotic rose	11,390	13,172	15,686	12,974
11a.	English Ivy	6,520	10,852	5,943	4,785
12	Cogongrass* (Acres)(12/31/2016)	273	270	196	167

Invasive Species: Any plant or animal that has been introduced and aggressively competes with and displaces local native communities; normally having no native enemies to limit reproduction and spread.

59 counties have had cogongrass detections since 2007, and to date 29 of the 59 counties are now free of cogongrass. Georgia's proactive treatment program assists landowners across the state, and 80% of all known cogongrass spots in Georgia are considered inactive.

*** Cogongrass has not been recorded on FIA plots. The Georgia Forestry Commission documents all known cogongrass infestations.**

The Dirty Dozen List of Non-native Invasive Species Removing Honeysuckle and Fescue.

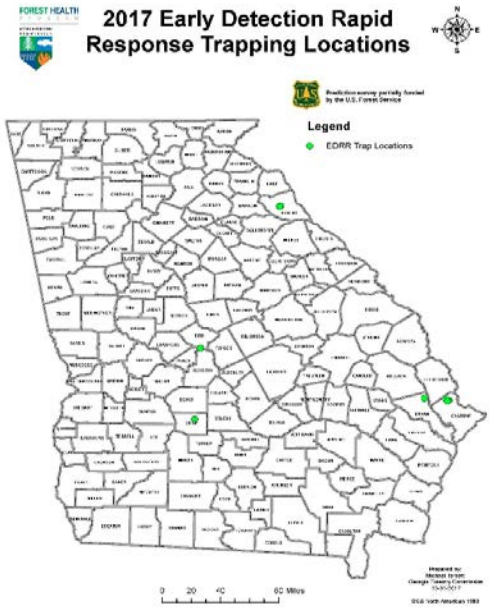
Invasive Plant Species Control Program:

Addressing invasive species occurrence and control is a growing issue. Education of the public about the harm nonnative invasive plants can cause in Georgia has been conducted during the past year to bring relevant and current topics to the landowners of Georgia.

The Invasive Species Control Cost Share Program assists landowners in control of nonnative species by targeting specific invasive species to increase the amount of healthy, productive forests across Georgia. Georgia's efforts have focused on Chinese privet, Japanese climbing fern, Chinese tallowtree, Chinaberry, and Nonnative rose. The majority of the request, were provided for the control of Nonnative privet.

Early Detection Rapid Response:

In 2017, the Georgia Forestry Commission deployed traps around facilities accepting international cargo with solid wood packing material. During the annual warehouse survey, 12 sites were selected across the state to establish a total of 36 Early Detection Rapid Response traps. Twelve Lindgren funnel trap sites (36 traps) were deployed in the Macon, Cordele, Elberton, and Savannah areas for the detection of nonnative exotic bark and ambrosia beetles around warehouse sites identified as high priority sites.



Early Detection Rapid Response Trap Locations

First Introduction to The United States:

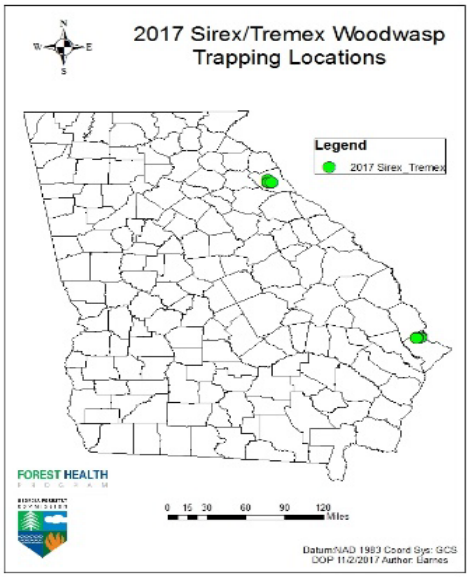
Xyleborinus artestriatus, 2010, and Ambrosiophilus peregrinus 2014, were both new introductions to the United States discovered through the Early Detection Rapid Response trapping program. Both insects have been recovered in multiple traps since their introductions, suggesting these new exotic ambrosia beetles are established in north Georgia and the Savannah area. No damage has been documented on native vegetation around the initial discovery site, and the preferred native plant hosts have not been determined.

In 2017, 238 warehouses visits were conducted across the state, which includes 40 new warehouse sites. Multiple requests for identification of suspect insects were received in 2017, and all specimens were taken to Rick Hoebeke, Collection Manager, Museum of Natural History, University of Georgia, for identification. None of the suspects were of concern. Having warehouse employees actively collecting insects that look unfamiliar is a very positive outcome.

Sirex / Tremex Woodwasp:

International cargo shipments containing solid wood packing material pose a severe and present threat to our forests in Georgia, due to the possibility of nonnative invasive pests being introduced to the United States. The danger is that ports of entry are not the final destination for cargo, they are only the initial entry point. Containers can be shipped hundreds of miles from the port of entry prior to being opened.

The Georgia Forestry Commission is proactive in searching for new nonnative invasives that can harm our forest. Sirex woodwasp trapping is conducted in conjunction with trapping for Tremex woodwasp *(Tremex fuscicornis)* which was identified during warehouse trapping in Elberton, Georgia in 2012.



Sirex / Tremex Trapping Locations

Sirex woodwasp *(Sirex noctillio)*, remains a pest of high concern that has yet to be detected in Georgia. The Sirex woodwasp poses a threat to all of Georgia's southern yellow pines and warrants monitoring through our Early Detection Rapid Response protocols.

Tremex woodwasp *(Tremex fuscicornis)* was introduced in Georgia through an international cargo shipment of granite with solid wood packing material that was transported to Elberton, Georgia, where live wasps exited the container and escaped into the surrounding woods.

A series of insect traps are deployed at high risk warehouses receiving solid wood packing materials near Savannah and Elberton, Georgia. Trapping began in June, and was completed the first week of October.

No Sirex noctilio or Tremex woodwasp have been captured to date.

Asian Gypsy Moth Survey:

The Georgia Forestry Commission deploys traps to detect the presence of Gypsy Moth in Georgia. *The Asian Gypsy Moth is not established in Coastal Georgia or any other location in the United States and this multi-agency annual Gypsy Moth survey was conducted as a proactive effort to detect the presence of Gypsy Moth in the Savannah area.*

On September 25, 2015, a single, adult male, Asian Gypsy Moth was identified near the Port of Savannah in Garden City, Georgia. This find of a federally regulated pest, in the vicinity of a port of entry, produced an extended three year delimiting survey.

Following the Asian Gypsy Moth Survey and Response Guidelines, a ten mile by ten mile grid was established surrounding the initial Asian Gypsy Moth detection location, and then information was collected using "The Collector App." which increased our productivity and speed in completing the survey.

Georgia Forestry Commission teams established 905 Gypsy moth traps along the Savannah River waterway from north of the Savannah International Airport to the mouth of the Savannah River at Tybee Island, Georgia, and to the south side of Savannah. After four months of trapping, no additional Asian Gypsy Moths have been detected in Georgia.

In addition the Forest Health Management team established limited pheromone baited traps in Catoosa County, near the Georgia/Tennessee line, and both of these trapping sites returned no suspect Gypsy Moth.

34 gypsy moth traps were established around the Port of Brunswick and on Jekyll Island. There were no positive traps detected in this area in 2017.

Firewood Education and Outreach:

The Georgia Forestry Commission has formed a long term collaborative partnership with the Georgia State Parks Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The goal of this partnership is to encourage campers and travelers within Georgia, and visitors from out of state, to leave their firewood at home and buy locally harvested or certified firewood. The South-wide firewood education and outreach program presents a unified message concerning the dangers of transporting firewood, and this public awareness message has been disseminated to Georgia State Parks and to individuals using park facilities.

The majority of outreach has been through direct contact and educational programs at state parks to foster discussion, and change a mindset from an early age. In Georgia there are no mandates or regulations that prevent the long-distance transportation of firewood by a private citizen, but educational programs have sparked questions of "Why is transporting firewood bad?”

To drive the “Buy it Where You Burn it” theme home, the message is highlighted with outreach material and promotional items to be used in campers and at camp sites. These items are used by campground hosts, front desk check-in personnel, interpretive rangers, and park managers as a reminder of the importance of not transporting firewood.