



South Carolina Forestry Commission

FOREST HEALTH

2020 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS



Figure 1. An adult Asian longhorned beetle chewing an oviposition notch in the bark of a host tree, red maple.

The Resource

South Carolina's forest cover 12.9 million acres, which is 67% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land is in nonindustrial private ownership, covering about 11.4 million acres, with approximately 629,000 acres in national forests.

Forestry is the most important manufacturing industry in South Carolina, providing 84,000 jobs and a total economic impact of \$21 billion annually. \$1.3 billion in forest products are exported from South Carolina and forest products are the number one export commodity from the port of

Charleston. Trees are South Carolina's number one harvested crop. South Carolina's forests are known for their scenic beauty, attracting tourism, outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Major forest types in South Carolina include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, once more widespread, now make up four percent of South Carolina's forests, with other minor forest types accounting for an additional six percent.

Forest Issues and Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB)/Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.)

Spring trapping for southern pine beetle was interrupted by COVID and no data was collected this year. We did receive a large volume of calls from landowners concerning dead pines but all site visits revealed old *Ips* damage, most likely from last fall, but landowners were only noticing it this year. Foresters in Edgefield, McCormick, Anderson, Pickens and Oconee counties are being vigilant for southern pine beetle infestations.

Asian longhorned beetle

The most significant event in South Carolina this year was the first report of the Asian longhorned beetle in Charleston County in May. Immediately, Clemson's Department of Plant Industry and USDA-APHIS ALB eradication program began working to survey the extent of the infestation and put into place eradication plans. The Forestry Commission has allowed its foresters to visit infested trees for training and helps marginally with surveys. Tree removal has begun and some South Carolina Forestry Commission employees will help with extracting material from infested trees for research. 23,000 host trees have been surveyed, revealing 3,555 infested trees so far. A quarantine regulating the movement of hardwoods was put in place and covers 58.62 square miles.

Redbay mortality (laurel wilt disease)

Caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola* and vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) laurel wilt has killed many redbay trees along South Carolina's coast and continues to spread along bottomlands in the interior of the state. We are also seeing sassafras infected.

Cogongrass

As of 2020 a total of 13 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified in ten counties. Of these, only four remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive.

Strong Winds

Tornadoes struck Aiken County in April and we expect to see oak wilt take advantage of water oaks that lost limbs during this event. We should see evidence of this next spring and summer and are monitoring the situation.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For more information or assistance, please contact:

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