



# South Carolina Forestry Commission

## FOREST HEALTH

### 2022 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS



*Figure 1. Defoliation of hardwoods (tupelo, oaks, sweetgums) in Hampton County, SC.*

## 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 indicated populations of SPB in Edgefield, McCormick and Berkeley counties. A long term outbreak continued on the Francis Marion National Forest in Berkeley County, but no spots were identified in McCormick or Edgefield counties.

### **Asian longhorned beetle**

As of November 29, 2022, 6,587 infested trees had been detected and 4,245 of these had been removed. The quarantined area now includes 76.38 square miles, but may expand in the near future as infested trees are found near the edges. Prospects for eradication from the state look good. Studies indicate that the beetle had been in Charleston at least since 2008.

### **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 2022 a total of 17 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified in seven counties. Of these, only nine remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive. Infestations by county are: Anderson 1 active, Beaufort 4 (2 active, two inactive), Charleston 5 (3 active and 2 inactive), Hampton 4 (3 active and 1 inactive), Williamsburg 1 (inactive), Florence 1 (inactive), and Colleton 1 (inactive).

### **Forest tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma disstria***

There was extensive defoliation by forest tent caterpillar this spring in the Edisto, Savannah and Salkehatchie river basins.

**Native elm beetle, *Monocesta coryli***

For the fourth year in a row, we had sightings of severe defoliation of *Ulmus* spp., primarily *U. alata*, in Lexington, Richland, Fairfield, Newberry, Greenwood, and Union Counties. This was caused by the leaf beetle, *Monocesta coryli*. Damage was limited to forest edges. Of note... trees that had been impacted in previous infestations were not impacted this year.

**Oak wilt**

Oak wilt continued to be reported from sites in sandbelt counties, including Aiken, Barnwell, Lexington, Kershaw, and Florence.

**Brown spot needle blight on loblolly**

This year we detected a stand of loblolly infected with *Mycosphaerella dearnessii*. More typically found on longleaf, this was our first detection of this disease on loblolly in SC. It was confined to 30 acres of 30-year-old trees and was widespread on the tract in Greenwood County (every tree had it).

**Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina**

For more information or assistance, please contact:

**South Carolina Forestry Commission**

**PO Box 21707**

**Columbia, SC 29221**

**(803) 667-1002**

**[djenkins@scfc.gov](mailto:djenkins@scfc.gov)**

**USDA Forest Service**

**Southern Region, State & Private Forestry**

**Forest Health Protection**

**200 W.T. Weaver Road**

**Asheville, NC 28804**

**(828) 257-4320**