



Vermont Forest Health

Insect and Disease Observations—August 2012

Department of Forests, Parks, & Recreation
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Exotics



As part of the delimiting survey in Ct, increased numbers of purple traps will be placed in the vicinity of the known outbreak. (Photo: R. Kelley)

The **emerald ash borer infestation in Connecticut** (the 16th state known to have the insect within its borders) was determined to be several years old. Quarantines and restrictions on movement of firewood have been put in place. Detection efforts and delimiting surveys have also been beefed up. According to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the focus will be on slowing or preventing the spread of the insect into new areas while managing and reducing its numbers in places where it is already found. See http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?a=4173&q=509248&depNav_GID=1511.

No emerald ash borers were found during mid-survey checks of purple traps in Vermont.

Because of the mild winter, there was little mortality of **hemlock woolly adelgid** and we are seeing a lot of adelgids in infested areas. They are currently in the “settled crawler” life stage, and are dormant for the summer (aestivating). A few trees in the Brattleboro/Dummerston area are beginning to look symptomatic, with a gray/green look from a distance, some yellow needles, and little-to-no new growth.

Diseases

Oak dieback, quite noticeable between Middlesex and Waterbury as you travel on I-89, appears to be classic case of defoliation-incited oak decline. Oaks in that area have been predisposed to decline and mortality by multiple stressors, including several years of defoliation by an oak leaf tier/leaf roller complex, exposure, and sandy soils that are also shallow, due to ledge. Mortality is also reported in New Hampshire following defoliation by the same oak leaf tier/roller complex.



Aerial surveys have helped show areas where oaks have died after repeated years of defoliation in conjunction with other stressors. (Photo: D. Dillner)

Defoliation of white birch, caused by **Septoria**, has been observed at some mid- and lower-elevation sites. The disease is more often associated with high elevation trees. A related disease has also been reported on sugar maple, and leaf blight defoliation of balsam poplar is common. See <http://ipm.illinois.edu/diseases/rpds/648.pdf>. Drought has forced many trees to drop leaves prematurely.



Trees not compromised by other issues are unlikely to suffer long-term consequences from Septoria disease.

Spore-producing bodies (right) can sometimes be seen within the Septoria leaf spots.

(Photos: R. Kelley)



White pines affected by foliar disease have lost their brown needles, leaving the trees with thin but green crowns. Weather data loggers are being installed in some of our pine needlecast impact monitoring sites to aid US Forest Service pathologists in their regional research into the needlecast maladies.

Insects

The work of **locust leafminer** is giving affected trees a bronzy-brown appearance. See <http://www.forestpests.org/vermont/locustleafminer.html>

Adult locust leafminers skeletonize leaves before seeking overwintering sites.
(Photo: R. Kelley)



Larvae of the cherry scallop shell moth feed communally on leaves from July to early fall in shelters made by tying leaves together with silk. (Photo: R. Kelley)

Fall webworm is becoming obvious and populations appear to be higher this year than in the recent past. Although webs can be an unattractive nuisance, the loss of leaves generally has little effect on the health of the tree because it occurs at the end of the growing season. See <http://entomology.cornell.edu/cals/entomology/extension/idl/upload/Fall-Webworm.pdf>.

Feeding by the caterpillars of the **cherry scallop shell moth** is noticeable. Adult moths emerge throughout the summer, with a peak in June. The eggs are laid on the underside of leaves in tiered masses one to four layers deep. Once fully grown, the larvae drop to the ground and pupate. See http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pestal/cssm/cherry_scallop_shell_moth.htm.

Hickory **tussock moth caterpillars**, mentioned in our July Forest Health Update (<http://www.vtfpr.org/protection/documents/2012ForestHealthJulyObservations.pdf>) aren't the only tussocks you might encounter. The rusty tussock (*Orgyia antiqua*), white-marked tussock (*O. leucostigma*), definite marked tussock, (*O. definita*) and spotted tussock (*Lophocampa maculata*) have all been observed recently, though not in the numbers seen with the hickory tussock. Visit <http://bugguide.net/node/view/335> and <http://bugguide.net/node/view/5240> for more details, including photos of the adults, of these tussock moths.



David Wagner, speaking of the definite tussock in his book Caterpillars of Eastern North America, comments that "an hour-long sortie any September day should yield a caterpillar or two." (Pictured: Definite Tussock Moth; Photo: P. van Loon)



Birch leaf folder is common on yellow birch in the southern Green Mountains, but has not caused significant damage.

The birch leaf folder is a fun insect to show kids, who always seem to like a good game of hide and seek! (Photo: R. Kelley)

The polyphagous **green stink bug** seems to be plentiful this year. See <http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/documents/GreenStinkBugsinYourGarden.pdf>

We've had some interesting inquiries from people who have observed **giant silkmoths** or their associated caterpillars this year.



The polyphemus is one of our beautiful giant silk moths. (Photo: B. Crenshaw)

Vertebrate Mischief

We have observed first hand and received reports of a massive **early drop of red oak acorns**.



What we're seeing may be the result of the super-high squirrel populations. It wouldn't be the first time they were caught in the act of being wasteful feeders.



For more information, contact the Forest Biology Laboratory at 802-879-5687 or:

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