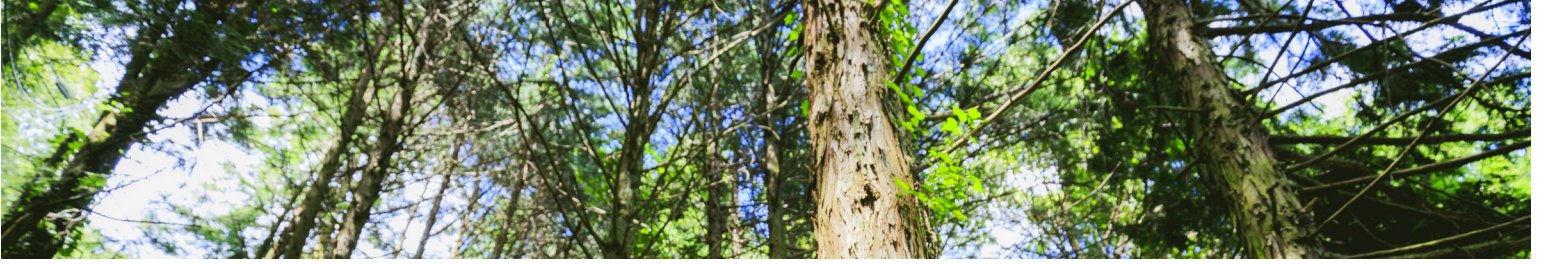


Vermont Forest Health Red Pine Decline Update



January 2025 | Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

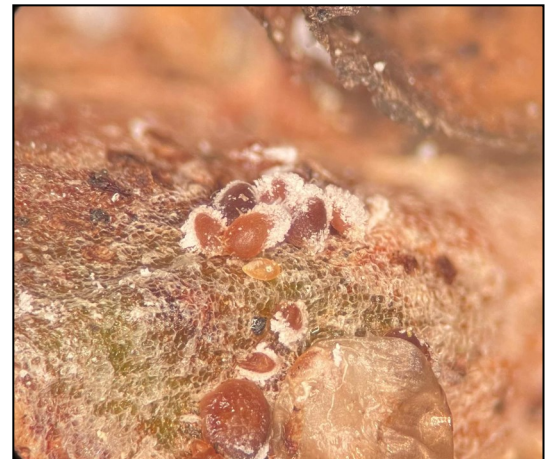


Declining red pine stand. Photo credit: FPR Staff.

Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) has been in a state of undetermined decline across Vermont over the last decade. In an attempt to classify the casual agent, forest health staff have been monitoring red pine through surveys and monitoring plots and have observed a variety of wood boring insects, defoliators as well as root, stem and foliar pathogens. More information on these pests and pathogens can be found in the [Annual Forest Health Conditions Report](#). **In November of 2024, red pine scale (RPS, *Matsucoccus matsumurae*, formerly *M. resinosa*) was observed in Waterbury, Vermont, and subsequently confirmed by U.S. Forest Service staff via DNA analysis.**

Red pine scale is an introduced and ecologically harmful insect that primarily spreads by wind. It is a sapsucking insect that ingests phloem primarily in the crown of red pine trees, which can lead to severe dieback and mortality of hosts. There are no effective predators or chemical control methods in forested settings, however RPS can be managed mechanically by removing infested trees and chipping their crowns. Any harvests should take place during the winter when RPS is least active to help slow its spread. RPS is limited by temperature, being most susceptible to mortality and therefore population crashes at temperatures of -10°F or colder.

Although RPS is capable of killing trees, it is not the sole causal agent of red pine decline in Vermont, and has only been identified with an active population in Washington County. However, where RPS is present, it is another stressor that contributes to reducing overall tree health and vigor. For more information on RPS or to report a sighting, please visit [VTinvasves.org](https://vtinvasves.org).



Microscope image of RPS nymphs. Photo credit: Kevin Dodds, USDA Forest Service.