

3/31/2011 Notice

This is notification that redbay ambrosia beetles and the fungus that causes laurel wilt have been identified and isolated/confirmed in the Colly area of eastern Bladen County. There are indications that it may also be present in as many as four other nearby counties, but at this time we are awaiting confirmation before we can say for sure. Education of forestry interests including loggers in Southeastern North Carolina is important as near future natural spread is expected.

**We are strongly encouraging cooperation from forestry interests and loggers, and others to help us slow the spread of the insect and laurel wilt fungus.**

Eradication and control of natural spread is not possible. We have discussed regulatory approaches (quarantines) with NCDA, but agreed that that also would not be feasible. Education and awareness, including the need to voluntarily restrict the movement of infested/infected wood, are our most valuable tools for dealing with this forest health concern that is here to stay.

We are highly recommending that tree materials (logs, chips, trimming debris, firewood material) from **dead redbays/swampbays** be left on-site, preferably destroyed on-site (chipped and left on site, burned, or simply felled and leave). Sweetbay and loblolly bay are not affected as they are not in the Lauraceae family—it does kill sassafras which is in the family. Live, non-symptomatic trees are not the problem. **Wilting and dead redbays are the main concern.** Dead trees contain literally hundreds of contaminated ambrosia beetles that come out of the wood and infest nearby trees along highway routes, and around destination mills, cogeneration plants, landfills, and other areas where vehicles with contaminated wood visit. Naturally, the pest moves on average 20 miles per year, but forestry, tree companies and right-of way clearing operations can accidentally spread it much farther in a day. We can't stop it from moving naturally, but we would like to minimize the human spread of the disease.

Below is an excerpt from the NC Forest Assessment Related to redbay ambrosia beetle and laurel wilt. Additional information can be found at the USFS laurel wilt website: [www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/index.shtml). Signs and symptoms of the insect and disease are very easy to detect.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. My staff and I are also willing to attend or set up meetings and trainings, including field trips to positive sites to provide more information and awareness.

Thank you for your cooperation,

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