

# Northeast Region Forest Pest Update – 6/14/07

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## Insects:

**Basswood defoliator** – Yellowbanded Underwing caterpillars (*Catocala cerogama*) caused light defoliation on basswood in Menominee and Oconto Counties. These caterpillars feed during spring and early summer, adults are present in August and September. The larvae vary in color from light green to gray to brown which made identification a bit more challenging.



**Buffalo tree hoppers** – reports of damage to young oaks by this insect are coming in from several places in Shawano County, one report from Waupaca County, and a report from Lincoln County. Buffalo Tree Hoppers are named for their shape since they have a

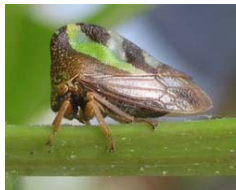


Photo by Rosie Marquette

large hump on their backs similar to a buffalo (left a single tree hopper). This insect sucks the sap from twigs and leaf petioles of oaks. They are gregarious and often feed as a group, lined up along the



Photo by Rosie Marquette

branch (right), all sucking sap from the tree. Feeding can cause twigs to die and can also weaken the tree. All reports have been on young oaks.

Control is difficult. Spraying with a general insecticide will kill those tree hoppers that are on that tree at that time but since they're capable of flight other tree hoppers could move in. If you only have a few trees systemic insecticides might work well.

**EAB calls** – please make use of the [EAB Hotline \(1-800-426-2803\)](tel:1-800-426-2803) by referring people to the hotline if they think they have EAB or if they have called you because their ash trees are declining. The hotline is staffed by DATCP EAB specialists who will ask all the questions

necessary to rule out or identify EAB. They will even make a site visit if they think the call sounds like EAB. We appreciate everyone who is watching for EAB!

**Eastern tent caterpillar** – large populations of this caterpillar menaced homeowners in Green Lake and Marquette Counties this year, defoliating most hardwoods in an area then migrating across roads and lawns in search of more. The caterpillars have all pupated now, leaving their web nests in the trees that they defoliated. Moths will emerge in a couple weeks at which time they will mate, lay eggs, and die; the eggs will hatch next spring to start the cycle over again. For homeowners who had large populations this year they should be prepared for large populations again next year. Eggmasses (right) are wrapped around twigs and can be clipped off and disposed of. Spraying Bt next year when the caterpillars are still small can be very effective at reducing the population to an acceptable level.



**European pine sawfly** – extensive defoliation of young red pine (4-8' tall) by European Pine Sawfly is occurring in Brown, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Outagamie, Waupaca, and Waushara Counties (and probably others). Older red pine are also suffering damage as well as Scotch, Austrian, and Mugo pines. Sawfly larvae look similar to a naked caterpillar and feed in groups. European Pine Sawflies are dark green in color with 3 pale stripes on the body and a black head (right). Damage can be severe but is usually limited to defoliation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year needles. Tree growth rates can be reduced since only 1 years needles will be left on the tree to produce food. Control options include squishing colonies by hand, spraying colonies with a soapy water mixture, or spraying the insects with a general insecticide. Since the populations are so large this year, landowners with defoliation this year should be prepared for more defoliation next year.



Photo by Tom VandenElzen

**Gouty oak gall** – a small gall wasp (*Callirhytis quercuspunctata*) creates these galls by feeding on the plant and stimulating the plant into an abnormal growth pattern that produces the gall which the insects then live inside. These galls have a long and complex development that takes two or more years to complete. The first stage is a blister-like leaf gall that occurs along larger leaf veins. In the photo at left I've cut one of the galls open and you can see a row of tiny larvae within the lower edges of the gall. The second stage is a knotty twig gall that is started in mid-summer (right) and becomes fully mature in 1 to 2 years. Severely affected trees can have branch dieback or branch mortality, young trees may be badly



disfigured. If the damage is occurring on just a few trees a systemic insecticide can be used to target the first year of the insect lifecycle, once the woody galls form the damage is done.

**Gypsy moth** - from Bill McNee, NER gypsy moth suppression coordinator. Gypsy moth caterpillars are now in their fourth and fifth instars in the southern half of NER while in the southern areas of the state gypsy moth has already begun to pupate. Nuisance complaints are picking up as far north as Marinette County. Currently, Adams and Dane Counties are generating the most nuisance complaints and interest in spraying in 2008. In NER, no county is currently generating a disproportionate number of phone calls. No reports of widespread defoliation have yet been received.

With the warm weather and below-average to average rainfall so far this year, gypsy moth populations are likely to increase again next year. Under these conditions, caterpillars develop faster and are less exposed to natural enemies. The fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*, seldom causes heavy mortality under warm, dry conditions. Thus, survival is better and more caterpillars survive to reproduce.

However, we're still well behind the mid-Atlantic states. According to published media reports, nearly 700,000 acres of Pennsylvania forests were defoliated last year and the infestation could be worse in 2007. Maryland reports estimate at least 600,000 acres of defoliation, and New Jersey is expecting 200,000 acres. Many entomologists in these states are currently forecasting an even worse summer in 2008.

**Larch casebearer** – scattered heavy defoliation of tamarack is occurring in the northern portions of the Northeast Region and in the Northern Region. Larch casebearer is a small caterpillar that mines out the interior of the needles, giving the tree a yellowish or tannish cast. In cases of severe defoliation the tree will appear to have no green needles. Repeated defoliation can weaken the tree making it susceptible to attack by Eastern Larch Beetle.

**Linden looper** – some defoliation by Linden Looper (right) is showing up in the northern parts of the state on Linden, a few maples, and birch. Reports from the UP indicate a larger, more widespread problem than what we're seeing here in Wisconsin.



Photo by Ron Eckstein

**Maple petiole borer** – this tiny sawfly larvae bores into the petiole of maples and feeds within the petiole creating a weak spot which will break allowing the leaf to drop to the ground. Damage is usually light and no control is necessary. Although the leaves lying on the ground can look alarming to many people I usually point out to homeowners that if you look up into the crown you cannot tell that any leaves have fallen, so the tree really is fine. This year I've seen this in Door County and Kewaunee County.

**Spiny oak sawfly** – this interesting sawfly was defoliating young oaks in Shawano County. These sawflies are about 3/4 inch long, are green with black heads, and have small black spines all over their backs. They will feed until late June or early July and can heavily defoliate young trees. Since they're sawflies you'll have to use a general insecticide if you want to spray them, or you could spray them with soapy water to kill them. A widespread outbreak in 2005



Photo by Rosie Marquette

defoliated oaks in several counties in the northwestern part of the state; I have only had one report of this critter so far this year.

**Willow sawfly** - these pretty sawfly larvae (*Nematus ventralis*) were defoliating black willow in Oconto County. Defoliation can be complete, with all leaves being consumed, but willow is often able to recover easily.



### **Diseases:**

**Ash anthracnose** - anthracnose causes portions of the leaf to die and may cause the leaf growth to be distorted (note distorted leaves on left side in photo). Usually these brown dead areas of the leaf are not a threat to the health of the tree and will merely make it a little unsightly. Early ash leaf drop, reported from many counties throughout NER, may be attributable to early anthracnose infections.



### **Other:**

**Firewood certification** – firewood dealers who are willing to heat their firewood to 160°F at the core for 75 minutes can obtain certification from DATCP for that firewood which can then be safely hauled anywhere. Firewood dealers could also use debarking, fumigation, two or more years of storage or another manner approved by DATCP as treatments to eliminate pests. This certification is voluntary and is good for one year. For more information on firewood certification contact Bob Dahl (DATCP) at [Robert.Dahl@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:Robert.Dahl@datcp.state.wi.us)

**Firewood confiscations at state parks** – due to the current rule requiring firewood entering state properties to originate from no further away than 50 miles from that park, there are a number of firewood confiscations taking place at the state parks. This confiscated wood is either burned immediately by park staff, or is double bagged and set aside for later disposal. Recent research from a Forest Service lab in Michigan has show that when EAB infested logs are double bagged the adults that emerge from the logs do not attempt to chew out of the bags so this is a suitable option for handling firewood that is confiscated.

**Frost damage** – a frost/freeze on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of May damaged newly emerging leaves of oak saplings in a Stockbridge/Munsee plantation (right). The tender



leaves were killed but the trees sent out a second set of leaves immediately. Ash seedlings in the same plantation were damaged as well (far right) but since ash tends to leaf out later than oak the damage was less noticeable, the ash were also sending out another set of leaves. Unexplained vertical cracks in the bark of some of the oak seedlings (left) which have occurred sometime after the growing season ended last year will have to be monitored to determine if they'll cause problems or if the trees will callus over these wounds.



**Roving billboard for EAB** – the billboard at right visited the Milwaukee area at the beginning of the month, making appearances at several major events including a Brewers game. Other similar billboards are appearing along highways in the Midwest encouraging people to pack marshmallows, flip flops, swim gear, etc, instead of firewood.



**Tornado damage** – on June 7 a tornado traveled 36 miles, clearing a ½ mile wide path which began in Menominee County, passed through Langlade County and into Oconto County. More than 14,000 acres were directly in the path of the tornado and forests were leveled. Accompanying 3 and 4 inch hail and strong winds did further damage outside the immediate path of the tornado. The photos below show some of the damage.



Aerial photo from Bill McNee

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/Fh/index.htm>