

West Central Region Forest Pest Update – 12/19/2008

(Todd J. Lanigan)

Topics covered:

Insects:

Jack Pine Budworm
Oak Fig Gall
Pandora Sphinx Moth
Two-spotted Spider Mites

Diseases:

Bacterial Leaf Scorch

Other:

Insects:

Jack Pine Budworm – I finally have some good news concerning Jack Pine Budworm. For the most part, the budworm population has declined in 8 of the 11 counties I surveyed this year. Egg mass surveys were conducted in Adams, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, Pierce, Portage, St. Croix, and Wood counties. Survey results indicate declining populations of Jack Pine Budworm in Adams, Clark, Eau Claire, Juneau, Monroe, Portage, and Wood counties. The red pine stand in Pierce County does have some top dieback in the stand. St. Croix County is holding at the same levels as it was in 2007, very light defoliation.

Scattered sites in Dunn (red pine stands), Jackson (jack and red pine stands), and Pierce counties (red pine stands), may experience moderate to heavy defoliation in 2009.

The budworm population in the red pine stand surveyed in Pierce County has declined. However, the budworm has spread into an adjacent red and white pine stand of the same age as the red pine stand surveyed - 20-30 years old. In this red and white pine stand both species are being fed on. It will be interesting to see what happens in 2009 to this mixed stand, especially to the white pine.

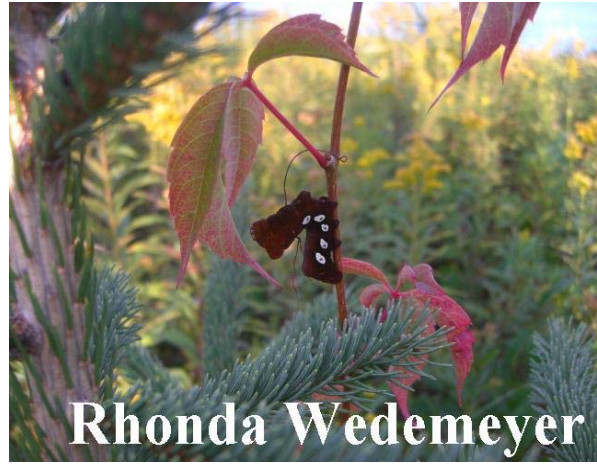
Based on early larval and egg mass surveys, in unthinned red pine stands that are 20-30 years old, the budworm population remains at high levels where damaging defoliation can take place. Compare this to red pine stands of the same age and population levels that were thinned, budworm numbers drop significantly or disappear completely. Thinning the 20-30 year old red pine stands appears to be a good recommendation to control budworm populations and to reduce defoliation, top dieback, and mortality. All of the thinned stands had every third row removed. I have no idea if any other thinning regime would have the same results as the every third row removal.

Oak Fig Gall – I have seen these red galls on white oak seedlings throughout the years but I never could identify what the cause was. This year Christine Walroth saw them with a landowner and asked me about the galls. One of the photos Christine sent me is at the right. I sent the photos out to my counterparts in the other regions and Shane Weber (NOR) identified the galls as Oak Fig Gall caused by a small cynipid wasp (I hope I got the name correct Shane). I have only seen these on white oaks and they do not appear to cause any harm to the seedlings.



Pandora Sphinx Moth Caterpillar –

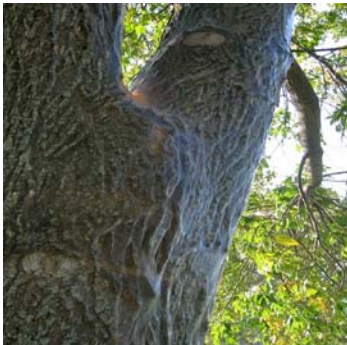
Rhonda Wedemeyer of Chippewa Falls sent me this picture of a caterpillar to identify. Rhonda took the photo off the back deck of her house. Fortunately for me I found a photo of the caterpillar in a USDA Forest Service book entitled: Caterpillars of Eastern Forests, publication FHTET-96-34, November 1997. It is an interesting looking caterpillar, but then again there are no such things as ugly insects, some are just better looking than others! For more photos of the Pandora Sphinx Moth, check out this link.



Rhonda Wedemeyer

<http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&lr=&safe=active&q=pandora+sphinx&btnG=Search+Images>

Two-Spotted Spider Mites – I received these photos of some plastic looking webs with orange stuff in it on some city trees from the City of Osseo. I have to “Thank” Osseo’s Chief of Police, Greg Gregerson for supplying the photos of this problem on the ash trees. The photos from left to right and top to bottom are: plastic webbing on the tree, plastic webbing with orange stuff in it, webbing and orange stuff at the base of the tree, and a close-up of orange stuff at the base of the tree.



The webbing was all on the north side of the trees. I really do not know if that means anything or not. What this “plastic webbing and orange stuff” turned out to be was overwintering female Two-Spotted Spider Mites. These mites can be a problem on ash trees as well as other plants. I was also supplied with a glob of the orange mites, and I have to admit, they looked pretty cool under the microscope. The orange mass was alive!

Diseases:

Bacterial Leaf Scorch (Kyoko Scanlon - Forest Pathologist) – This summer, Wisconsin participated in the survey supported by the U.S. Forest Service to investigate the geographic distribution and host range of Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS) in north central states. Leaf and twig samples were collected from symptomatic trees throughout southern and central Wisconsin and sent to a lab in Michigan State University to perform a genetic test. Out of 13 samples in 11 sites, 2 out of the 3 bur oak samples collected from the same site in Dane County were tested positive for BLS. This is the first confirmed case of bacterial leaf scorch in Wisconsin. The tests were repeated twice in the same lab, and the positive samples will be tested in a separate lab for confirmation. The Wisconsin DNR plans to collect more samples with similar leaf symptoms to evaluate the extent of this disease in 2009.

BLS is caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*. Hosts include oak, maple, elm, ash, and other deciduous trees. The pathogen lives in the xylem vessels of host plants. Infected leaves exhibit scorch symptoms with irregular margins. The pathogen is transmitted by xylem-feeding insects, such as leafhoppers and treehoppers. The disease has been found throughout the east, southeast, and some mid-west states.

More information about bacterial leaf scorch can be found at <http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/bls/>.

Other:

Arthropod Proverb: (British Guiana)

Who play wid de puppy get bit wid de fleas.

Previous issues of this update and regional forest health updates from NOR, NER, SCR/SER, and WCR are available from the WI DNR Forestry website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fh/inthenews/>