

# Northeast Wisconsin Forest Health Update

May 17, 2012

Topics covered this month:

## **Insects:**

Camouflaged critters  
Eastern tent caterpillars & burning the webs  
Eggs on siding and window screens  
Emerald ash borer  
Gypsy moth  
Hemlock woolly adelgid  
Pales weevil  
Ticks  
White pine weevil

## **Diseases:**

Annosum risk-based guidelines  
up for review  
Ash anthracnose and ash leaf drop

## **Other:**

Christmas tree pest ID website  
Ordering brochures  
Plant hardiness zones  
Sapsucker damage

## Insects

\*information and photos in this document from Linda Williams unless otherwise noted.

**Camouflaged critters** – insects can have some very impressive camouflage! Some mimic sticks or twigs, some mimic bark, some look like bird droppings. There are flies that mimic bees, and a wingless wasp that mimics an ant. So much cool variety out there! A forester sent me this picture of an *Ilia Underwing* caterpillar that looks amazingly like it's covered in lichens! This caterpillar can be somewhat variable and may look more like bark, but this version which looks like lichens is very well done! These caterpillars feed on oaks, but I've never seen them cause noticeable defoliation. For pictures of the adult and the other non-lichen forms of the caterpillar, check out <http://www.silkmoths.bizland.com/catilia.htm>



**Eastern Tent Caterpillars and burning the webs** – I’m sure you’ve all heard people say that they saw an Eastern Tent Caterpillar web and they burned it out of their tree because they just couldn’t stand it. Or that they saw a web nest on a branch and they pruned the whole branch out of the tree just to get rid of the web. My usual response to either of these scenarios is to tell the person “you just did more damage to your tree than the insects ever would”. It might sound harsh but it makes the point. Eastern tent caterpillars will indeed defoliate trees, but the trees are usually quick about sending out another set of leaves. But, if the homeowner has pruned off a branch or burned the web and damaged the tree, it will take years for the tree to recover.

Travis Verdegan, WI DNR Forest Ranger out of Wisconsin Dells, is testing out the “burn em out!” method for us. He found some webs in his apple trees and decided to see how burning them would work and how it would damage the trees. One tidbit that your average landowner might miss was an observation from Travis that “**Sure enough the little buggers light right up and fall all over the ground. In fact after they’ve burnt they turn into an ember that glows for quite awhile.**” So here is one more reason NOT to burn the webs out of the tree, since you don’t want to start a wildfire with “caterpillar embers” falling to the ground.

Eastern tent caterpillars are beginning to leave their webs in the southern part of the state to migrate to a place where they can pupate. In the northern part of the state the caterpillars will continue feeding for another week at least. I stopped on 5/15/12 to look at some webs and found 3 different instars, none of which were ready to pupate, so the development in the north was obviously delayed a bit by the numerous nights when it got down to freezing or just below that. It didn’t seem to kill them, just slowed them down a bit.



Eastern tent caterpillars, notice the variety of sizes/instars due to differences in development rates even within the same web nest.

**Eggs on siding and window screens** – numerous folks around the state have been getting calls and questions from the public about masses of eggs being laid on their siding and screens. The masses seem to appear overnight and are usually an inch or so in diameter. These are moth eggs; caterpillars will hatch out of them, and drop to the ground to feed. Brian Schwingle, forest health specialist in Rhinelander, was able to find a moth near these egg masses, which Phil Pellitteri



Variegated cutworm moth. Photo by Brian Schwingle.

identified as Variegated Cutworm moth. A quick walk around my house found 37 such egg masses plastered to the siding and door/window frames. Am I worried? No. Will they damage the

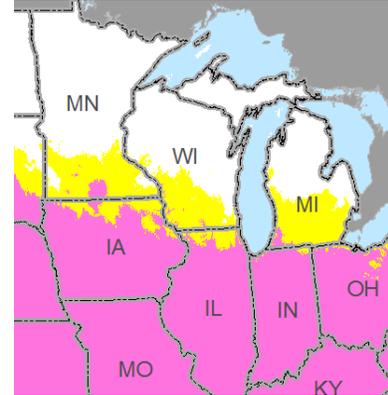


An assortment of egg masses found on a quick walk around my house.

siding? Apparently not, I could scrape them off fairly easily. The take home message? If you're worried about them grab a scrub brush and scrub them off your siding, but I'm just going to let them hatch.

**Emerald Ash Borer** – by Bill McNee. May 20-26 has been declared “Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week” in Wisconsin. A proclamation by Governor Walker urged Wisconsin residents and visitors to make themselves aware of EAB and the risks of moving firewood long distances. Read the news release at: <http://datcp.wi.gov/news/?Id=568>.

Weather data indicates that EAB adults are now beginning to emerge in southern Wisconsin. The map shows where EAB emergence was about to start (yellow) and had



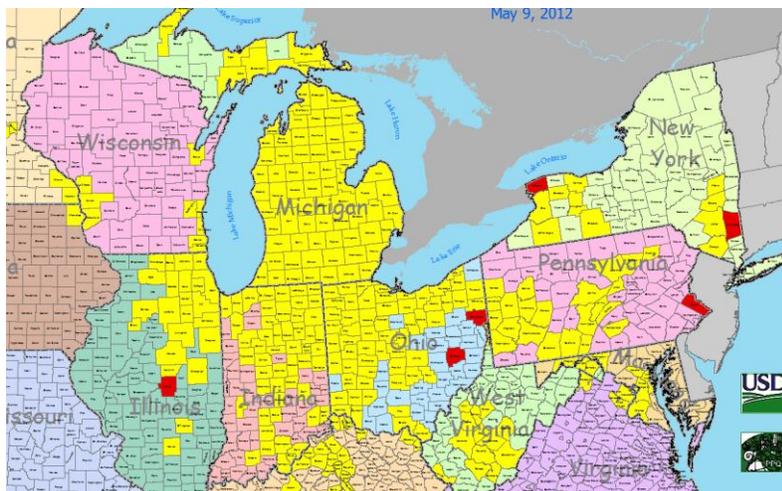
Areas of EAB adult emergence (pink) and nearing emergence (yellow) as of May 9.

begun (pink) as of May 9. Since it is now May 16 these two areas will have shifted north.

As we begin the field season and have the greatest chance of EAB detections, interested individuals can sign up for emailed EAB news at

[www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov](http://www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov).

Early May saw the first



New county detections of EAB so far in 2012. Map by USDA APHIS.

release of EAB biocontrols (aka EAB wasps) at the Victory infestation site in Vernon County, in western Wisconsin. A total of 800 *Spathius agrili* and *Tetrastichus planipennisi* were released. Both species attack EAB larvae beneath the bark. It is hoped that they will help to reduce EAB populations and slow the rates of population buildup and tree mortality. In 2011, these two species were released at Newburg in southeast Wisconsin.



*Tetrastichus planipennisi* adult. Photo by USDA APHIS.

Two types of EAB detection traps have been installed in northeast Wisconsin. The greatest numbers of purple panel traps are in Shawano and Waupaca Counties, although most northeast counties have traps present. In northeast Wisconsin there are double-decker detection traps at Peninsula and Potawatomi State Parks, and at Point Beach State Forest. Please contact Linda or Bill if you see any of these traps lying on the ground.



*Spathius agrili* adult. Photo by USDA APHIS.

The Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture has begun training four dogs to detect EAB. It has been reported that the dogs are quite good at detecting ash material and EAB-infested material in isolated containers, and are currently in training to detect this material in mixed piles. Dogs are also being used to detect the Asian Longhorned Beetle in eastern states. For more information, visit: [http://www.tristateneighbor.com/news/regional/article\\_83adad7c-99dc-11e1-a8a7-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.tristateneighbor.com/news/regional/article_83adad7c-99dc-11e1-a8a7-001a4bcf887a.html).

**Gypsy Moth** – from Bill McNee. Aerial spraying at Governor Thompson State Park in Marinette County occurred this morning, May 17. This is about 10-14 days of ahead of typical spray dates for the local area. A small, yellow airplane sprayed 190 acres at the newly-opened campground and adjacent boat landing. It is the only treatment area in this year's DNR gypsy moth suppression program, and used Foray, a bacterial insecticide containing *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki*.

Northeast Wisconsin can expect to start seeing inch-long gypsy moth caterpillars within the next week or so. Preparing burlap collection bands on ornamental host trees (oak, birch, crabapple, etc.) would be appropriate at this time. Check the burlap each afternoon and destroy or use soapy water to drown any caterpillars found. Insecticide treatment of individual trees is another control option. More information can be found at: [www.gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://www.gypsymoth.wi.gov).

Preliminary National Weather Service data for Green Bay and Oshkosh shows that May temperatures to date are 5-6 degrees above average. March temperatures were 15-16 degrees above average and April temps were 1-2 degrees above average. With the mild winter and warmer temperatures this spring, we can expect an increased population of caterpillars this spring and summer as long as the next few weeks aren't wet. Some areas can expect to see the return of nuisance caterpillars and interest in aerial spraying in 2013.

Wisconsin's first gypsy moth hatch was seen on April 2 in Green County, south of Madison. This is the earliest hatch in memory and is due to the very warm March weather. In 2012 the first slow-the-spread spraying in southwest Wisconsin (on April 26) began nearly two weeks earlier than the first hatch in 2011 (on May 9).

**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid found in Indiana** – In last month's pest update we reported that hemlock woolly adelgid had been found in southwest Michigan for the first time. Since then, the exotic pest has also been found nearby in northern Indiana as well as a new county in southeastern Ohio where observant citizens reported seeing the white material on the trees. Heavy hemlock mortality has occurred in eastern states where this insect is well-established. Wisconsin DNR Forest Health staff will continue to survey for this



Aerial spraying for gypsy moth.



Gypsy moth caterpillars hatching from an egg mass.



Hemlock woolly adelgid on hemlock. Photo from [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)

insect in 2012. This exotic insect has not been found in Wisconsin.

If you see small cotton balls on hemlock branches in Wisconsin, contact a DNR forest health specialist. For more information on this insect, visit:

[http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest\\_al/hemlock/hwa05.htm](http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/hemlock/hwa05.htm).

**Pales weevil** – pales weevil can cause significant damage to pine seedlings. Adult weevils are attracted to freshly harvested pine stands where they breed in fresh stumps and old root systems. Adult weevils emerging from the stumps and roots of the old stand feed on the bark of twigs of seedlings. Newly planted seedlings can be damaged enough to cause mortality. Whitish, crystallized resin forms over the wounds, giving the seedling a sugary appearance. Pales weevil feeds on most conifers but most recently I've seen it on red pine and white pine seedlings that were planted immediately following harvests of red pine stands. Control is usually achieved by waiting to replant for 1 full year or even 2 years after the harvest of the mature stand. This waiting period allows weevils to come to the stand, infest the fresh stumps, emerge, and leave the stand before you plant any new seedlings. For more info and additional pictures check out <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/pales/fidl-pales.htm>



Pales weevil adult feeding on main stem of young seedling.

**Ticks** – it seems like I've had an awful lot of ticks on me this spring. The pics below (left and center) are of the immature deer ticks, just to give a sense of size. In the picture at right is an adult female deer tick on the emerging leaves of an oak seedling. Deer ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) are also called bear ticks or blacklegged ticks, and they take 2 years to complete their life cycle, which is why you can usually find both adults and nymphs at the same time. When the tiny larvae emerge from the eggs they can pick up the lyme disease organism by feeding on an infected host, and any subsequent feedings after that, as they complete their life cycle, can transmit lyme disease.



**White pine weevil** – saw this nice example of white pine weevil damage on spruce the other day. White pine weevil (*Pissodes strobi*) sometimes called tip weevil, infests the terminal leader of white pine, jack pine, and spruce. It prefers stout leaders, so spruce and open-grown jack pine can be favorite hosts. Adult weevils are out now, laying eggs on the terminal leaders, just under the expanding buds. The eggs hatch and the larvae bore under the bark of the terminal and feed just under the bark, moving downwards as they feed. Meanwhile, the buds continue to expand but quickly run out of water and food and begin to wilt and curl, giving the terminal a look that is very characteristic of white pine weevil damage. White pine, jack pine, and spruce are all fairly adept at recruiting a side branch to take over apical dominance when the terminal leader is killed by white pine weevil, although this process will create a crook in the stem at that point. For more information and pictures of the adult and the larvae go to [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/wp\\_weevil/weevil.htm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/wp_weevil/weevil.htm)



White pine weevil damage on spruce

## Diseases

**Annosm risk based guidelines up for review** – Paul DeLong, WI DNR Chief State Forester, recently sent an email to forestry partners throughout the state regarding the proposed risk-based guidelines to prevent annosum, and requesting input on scientific accuracy as well as if the guidelines are operationally practical in the field. The proposed guidelines are specific to state owned properties and the following excerpt is from the Purpose section of the document:

The proposed guide is designed to help landowners/property managers determine whether the fungicide treatment should be considered to reduce the risk of the introduction of annosum root rot. The proposed guide should be used also by foresters and loggers to help communicate with landowners/property managers about the fungicide treatment option. It was created to be scientifically-sound, based on currently available scientific information, and also operationally-practical in the field. A user will obtain information about whether a fungicide treatment is recommended based on current scientific knowledge and observations in Wisconsin, by simply answering a series of questions.

If you did not receive the document for review and would like the information please email me [Linda.Williams@wi.gov](mailto:Linda.Williams@wi.gov) and I will send the information to you so that you can read it and comment on it.

The timeline for review is as follows:

- May 11, 2012 proposed guide sent for public input
- June 7, 2012 partner listening session – Green Bay
- June 14, 2012 partner listening session – Wausau
- June, 20, 2012 Council on Forestry Meeting - Ashland
- June 26, 2012 public listening session – Wisconsin Dells
- June 28, 2012 public listening session – Eau Claire
- July 20, 2012 written comments due
- August 17, 2012 final draft guide document developed

- September, 2012 partner briefing
- September 27, 2012 Council on Forestry – Steven Point
- October, 2012 publish final guide

**Ash anthracnose and ash leaf drop –**

scattered calls are beginning to come in from around the state of ash trees suddenly dropping their leaves. At this time of year some ash trees will purge their damaged leaves, including those damaged by early anthracnose infections and/or frost. This year the culprit is probably more frost than anthracnose, but the tree will purge the damaged leaves regardless of the reason. Be prepared for more calls since



Leaflets damaged by anthracnose.

the damage can be significant when the trees purge these leaves, and it is usually quite sudden. Some trees will retain these misshapen leaves through the growing season and this damage is usually mostly cosmetic, not affecting the long term health of the tree. If the tree does purge the damaged leaves it will attempt to send out a second set of leaves to sustain it through the summer so the lack of leaves is temporary, although very alarming to some folks.



Ash leaflets damaged by frost. Some trees will drop these leaflets, later sending out new leaves.

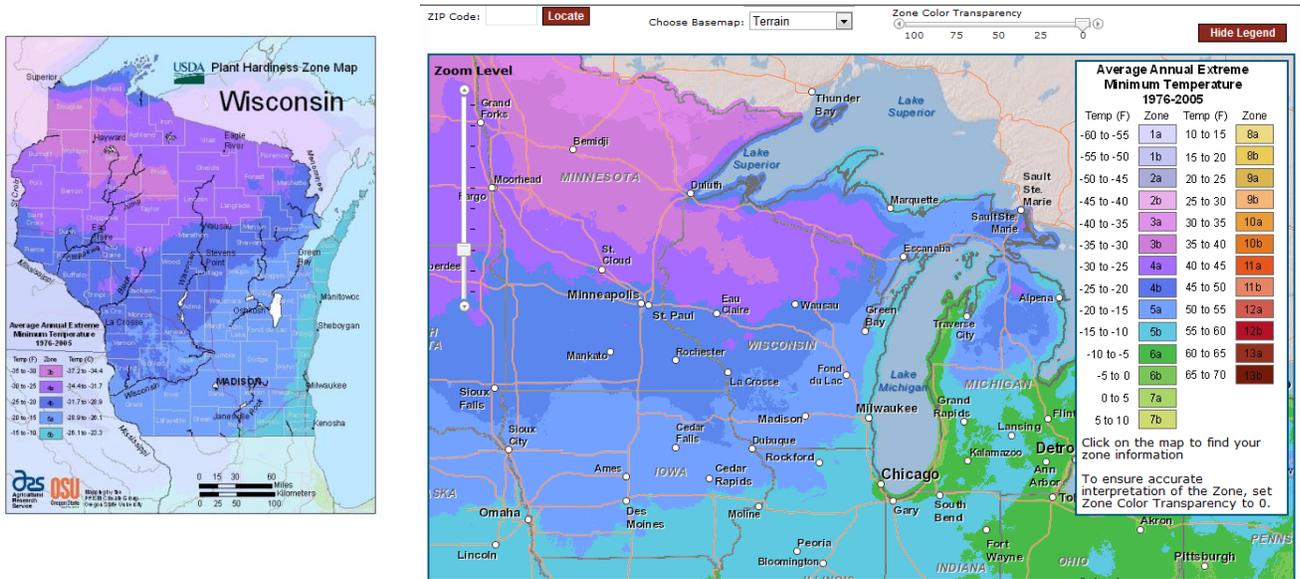
## Other/Misc.

**Christmas tree pest ID** – check it out! DATCP has a webpage to help identify insect and disease issues on Christmas trees! But it’s also useful for identifying problems on young conifer plantations! [http://datcp.wi.gov/Plants/Christmas\\_Trees/Christmas\\_Tree\\_Pests\\_and\\_Diseases/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Plants/Christmas_Trees/Christmas_Tree_Pests_and_Diseases/index.aspx) From this page you can access the Christmas Tree Pest Manual, which is a very handy reference, or you can go to the bottom of the page and click on the specific tree to get a list of common insect/disease issues.

**Ordering Brochures** - DNR staff wanting to order forest health brochures can visit this site on the DNR Intranet and order them directly: <http://intranet.dnr.state.wi.us/int/land/forestry/Publications/>. Most brochures can also be printed as a PDF directly from this website.

Non-DNR staff can contact Linda or Bill for a list of forest health brochures that can be ordered. We may also be able to send you a PDF so you can make as many copies as you need.

**Plant hardiness zones** – the 2012 plant hardiness zone maps are out and the webpage is interactive <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/> You can get a single state graphic, or you can chose the interactive option (below right, a screen shot).



**Sapsucker damage** – yellow-bellied sapsuckers are migratory birds that drill rows of shallow holes into the bark of trees. They do this so create sapflow, which they later come back to and lick up using their brush-like tongue. Apparently they will also eat small insects that are attracted to the sap, but their primary focus is the sap. The tree usually grows over these holes within a year or two, although the external signs in the bark will remain for many years. Stain can be introduced through these holes, discoloring the wood. For some reason sapsuckers seem to have favorite trees and will come back to the same tree year after year to drill new holes. As a general rule this damage doesn't usually kill the tree. The only way I know of to keep the birds from creating the holes is an actual physical barrier, like hardware cloth or something to prevent the birds from accessing the trunk, which is rarely practical.



Sapsucker damage on pine, where the damage actually caused the bark to dry out and crack.



Sapsucker damage to birch.

Report EAB:

by phone 1-800-462-2803

by email [DATCPEmeraldAshBorer@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPEmeraldAshBorer@wisconsin.gov)

visit the website <http://emeraldashborer.wi.gov/>

Report Gypsy Moth:

by phone at 1-800-642-6684

by email [dnrfrgypsymoth@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrfrgypsymoth@wisconsin.gov)

visit the website <http://www.gypsymoth.wi.gov/>

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**Note: This pest update covers forest health issues occurring in Northeastern Wisconsin. This informal newsletter is created to provide up-to-date information to foresters, landowners, and others on forest health issues. If you have insect or disease issues to report in areas other than northeastern Wisconsin please report them to your local extension agent, state entomologist or pathologist, or area forest pest specialist.**

Pesticide use: Pesticide recommendations contained in this newsletter are provided only as a guide. You, the applicator, are responsible for using pesticides according to the manufacturer's current label directions. Read and follow label directions and be aware of any state or local laws regarding pesticide use.