

West Central WI Forest Health Report

September 2013

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Insects

Emerald Ash Borer

EAB continued its spread across SE Wisconsin with a number of new finds in quarantined counties since July. The biggest summer EAB news was the detection of EAB in Douglas County in the city of Superior. Superior tree staff found d-shaped exit holes and s-shaped galleries while removing a dead ash tree from a boulevard on August 8th. The center of the infestation was found several blocks away suggesting EAB has been in the city for a number of years. The addition of Douglas County brings WI to 20 quarantined counties.

Figure 1. Map of the 20 EAB quarantined counties in WI as of September 2013.



Check out these photos forest health specialist Bill McNee took of EAB damage near Newberg a few weeks ago.



Photos 1-2. Aerial photos of EAB damage near Newberg, WI 5 years after its discovery.

Basswood Defoliation

Forest health staff in northern Wisconsin have noticed insect feeding damage to basswood in 2012 and 2013. Damage presented as window feeding on the underside of leaves. The culprit escaped detection in 2012 but was discovered during recent surveys by Linda Williams. We believe the damage is mainly being caused by a very tiny caterpillar, *Bucculatrix improvisa*, from a group known as the ribbed cocoon maker moths. Caterpillar identification is extremely difficult so we hope to rear some pupae through the winter until they emerge as moths next spring. A case-making caterpillar, *Coleophora tiliaefoliella*, may also be involved (<http://bugguide.net/node/view/400714>).



Photos 3-4. Caterpillars and a pupa of the insect damaging basswood in northern WI in 2012 and 2013.

Kermes Scale on Oak

Branch tip mortality of oak has appeared over the past 4-6 weeks in many areas of WI. The damage is mostly light in central WI but more severe in some areas. The damage is a result of feeding by Kermes scale insects. Branch tips are often killed from the point where the scale insect feeds to the tip. Female Kermes are immobile, light brown, round insects that cluster near the buds and feed on oak sap. If you grab a branch to look at what is causing the damage you will likely be greeted by some angry ants that protect the scales. Natural enemies typically control the populations so treatment is rarely necessary.

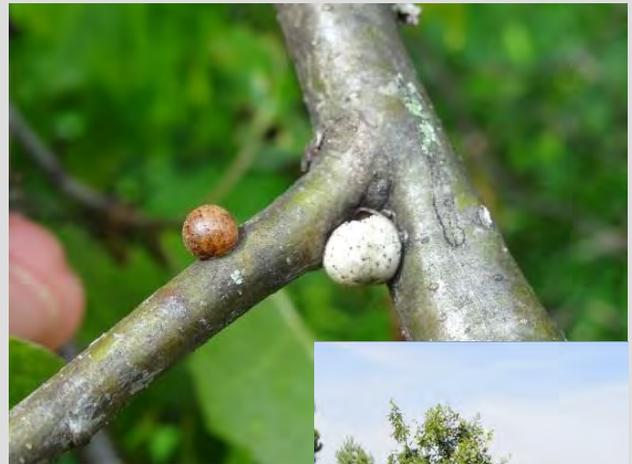


Photo 5. A living (brown) and cast shell (white) of Kermes scale.

Photo 6. An oak with branch tips killed by Kermes scales.

Spruce Bud Scale (by Todd Lanigan)

A homeowner contacted the DNR Forester here in Eau Claire about spruce trees dying in their yard. The homeowner brought in a sample of a white spruce branch, but unfortunately the branch they brought in looked nice and healthy. Upon closer examination of the branch, I did find Spruce Bud Scale. Spruce bud scale got its name because it looks like a spruce bud and you can mistake the scale for a bud. Spruce bud scale is found more often on lower branches than on upper branches. When the population is high, the lower branches can be killed. Stressed trees may support a higher population of spruce bud scale than healthy trees. There is one generation per year. Because of the way scales feed (piercing/sucking mouthparts), a byproduct from the feeding is produced called honeydew. Honeydew is basically sugar water. The honeydew usually attracts ants, so if you see ants crawling up and down the tree, you may want to check the tree out for scales. Aphids and mites feed the same way as scales and will also produce honeydew, so these critters could be in the tree as well. Another sign of scale, aphid, and/or mite activity would be finding black sooty mold growing on the excess honeydew. The sooty mold will look like the flocking you could get sprayed on Christmas trees. I do not know if people still buy flocked Christmas trees, so I may be showing my age here. ☺



Photo 7. Spruce bud scales feeding on a spruce. Photo from http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/spruce_bud_scale_attack_several_types_of_spruce.

Morning Cloak Caterpillars

Morning cloak caterpillars, also known as spiny elm caterpillars, were active in July on some elm trees in Marathon County. The spiny caterpillars feed in groups on elm, willow, birch, hackberry and poplar trees. Although they can defoliate a tree they are a native insect and control is rarely necessary. More info and photos of the adult moths at <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Nymphalis-antiopa>.



Photo 8. A morning cloak caterpillar.

Diseases Annosum

As we move into fall, keep your eyes open for annosum conks in any conifer stands you visit. The bright white growth is very obvious this time of year. If you suspect you've found annosum please let us know!

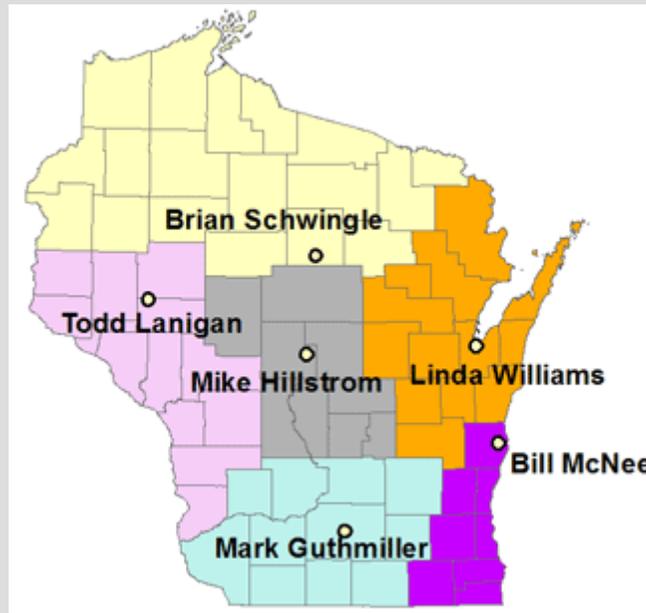
Photo 9. The bright white new growth on an annosum conk commonly seen in fall.



Fall Color and Heavy Seed Crops

One of the most common questions we have received recently is why leaves are changing color so early this year. Early color change is typically a sign of stressed trees. Many trees are still recovering from the major drought in 2012 and were further stressed by the lack of recent rain. Some trees also appear thin as if they have lost a lot of leaves. In many cases, these are Ash, Basswood, and Maple that have heavy seed crops. Heavy seed crops are common after stressful events such as drought. Many spruces are loaded with cones as well.

For general forest health and municipal level urban forest health issues contact:



<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/staff.html>

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Statewide reporting systems:

Report EAB:

by phone 1-800-462-2803
by email DATCPEmeraldAshBorer@wisconsin.gov
visit the website <http://emeraldashborer.wi.gov/>

Report Gypsy Moth:

by phone at 1-800-642-6684
by email dnrfgypsymoth@wisconsin.gov
visit the website <http://gypsymoth.wi.gov/>

For additional information visit the Forest Health web site: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/>
Note: This report covers forest health issues occurring in the West Central Region of Wisconsin. The purpose is to provide up-to-date information on forest health issues to foresters, forest landowners, and anyone else interested. We welcome your comments/suggestions on this newsletter as well as reports on forest health problems in your area. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please contact Mike Hillstrom at Michael.hillstrom@wisconsin.gov. Previous issues of this update and regional forest health updates from NER, NOR and SOR, are available from the WI DNR Forestry website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/Publications.html> Articles written by Mike Hillstrom unless otherwise noted.

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.