



BRANCHING OUT

An Integrated Pest Management
NEWSLETTER
for Trees and Shrubs

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Thank You to Our Scouts and Diagnosticians

Amy Albam, Carol Bradford, Dawn Dailey O'Brien, Don Gabel, Sandra Jensen, Hillary Jufer, Karen Klingenberg, Elizabeth Lamb, Jen Lerner, Jessica O'Callahan, Zaidee Powers, Alice Raimondo, Mina Vescera, Mike Voss, Sandra Vultaggio

Scouting Report Notations:

- (#) Numbers in regular type note plate(s) in *Insects that Feed on Trees and Shrubs* (2nd edition) by W.T. Johnson and H.H. Lyon.
- (#) Numbers in italics note plate(s) in *Diseases of Trees and Shrubs* (2nd edition) by W.A. Sinclair, H.H. Lyon, and W.T. Johnson.

Scouting Report Conifers

Cedar-Apple Rust (129–133)—galls with signs of action seen on eastern red cedar in Tompkins and Suffolk Cos. Galls across the State are now showing the beginnings of telial horn development: all they need is some rain and warmth to expand fully.



Cedar-apple rust gall (Chris Kempton)

Cedar-Quince Rust (129–133)—perennial galls on junipers in Rockland Co. Orange telia starting to show on eastern red cedar in Suffolk Co.



Cedar-quince rust just starting (Dan Gilrein)

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (32)—crawlers active in Westchester but mostly eggs still in Rockland and Passaic (NJ) Cos. Mostly 2nd generation eggs and a few crawlers (and few remaining live 1st generation females) in Suffolk Co. Suggest waiting until eggs hatch and crawlers settle to time treatment if using foliar spray; treat now if systemic (soil) drench used. Dinotefuran basal bark spray also an option and will act more quickly; apply as trees are actively growing. If using dinotefuran in landscapes remember neonicotinoid course is required annually (<https://tinyurl.com/NYNeonicCourse>). Next year course will also be required if using any imidacloprid or acetamiprid (Merit, TriStar, generics) in landscapes.



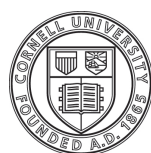
Hemlock woolly adelgid eggs and newly hatched 2nd generation nymphs (Dan Gilrein)

Larch Casebearer (11)—larvae active in Westchester Co.

Spruce Needleminer (9)—damage observed in Westchester Co.

Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs

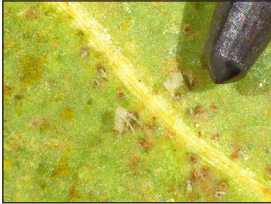
Andromeda Lacebug (204)—first-instar nymphs, some still emerging from eggs in leaves on Japanese andromeda in Suffolk Co.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension



Andromeda lacebug nymphs newly emerged on right of leaf; 2 nymphs emerging in upper left noted by pencil point and enlarged at right. (Dan Gilrein)



Aphids already... potato aphids (142) can overwinter as eggs on roses and the first small nymphs were seen in Suffolk Co. this week. Rose aphids can also overwinter on roses but are distinguished by black "tailpipes." More aphids (most likely potato) spotted on 'Gold Flame' spiraea in Westchester Co., often with lady beetle eggs nearby.



Potato aphid nymph on rose (Dan Gilrein)

Boxwood Leafminer (94)—plump larvae in Passaic Co. (NJ). A whopping 17 larvae observed feeding within a single leaf in the Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab in Ithaca. In Suffolk Co. leaf damage visible and larvae active in mines but no adults observed yet.



Boxwood leafminer damage (Dan Gilrein)

Boxwood Psyllid (137)—nymphs active Westchester and Tompkins Co., already making some cottony wax.

Downy Mildew (175)—on Knock Out rose in Rockland Co. Blotches of purple and dead spots on the stems indicate overwintering downy mildew.

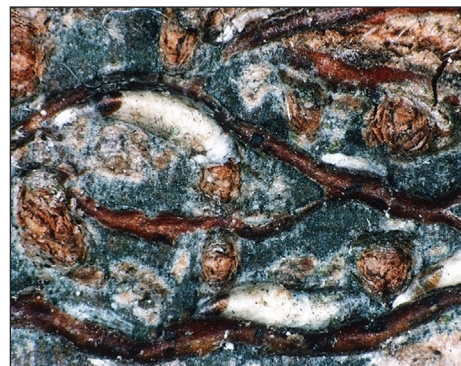
Eastern Tent Caterpillar (76)—early "tents" with caterpillars seen on cherry in Westchester Co. Hand-removal is usually easiest but caterpillars are also susceptible to Bt, spinosad, and other insecticides.



Eastern tent caterpillar "tent" (Hillary Jufer)

European Crane Fly—adults seen in Suffolk Co. Larvae, called "leatherjackets," are sometimes pests damaging roots of seedling woody plants, turf, and green roof sedum. Marsh crane fly (*Tipula oleracea*) is common around southeastern NY and present elsewhere in NY. *T. paludosa* (common European crane fly) is also common around Upstate NY. Adults of both species are active July-September; *T. oleracea* also has a spring generation. They can be distinguished from other crane flies by the pale band on the wings. More: <https://tinyurl.com/EurCraneFlies>

Japanese Maple Scale—on Kousa dogwood in Saratoga Co. Crawlers present probably mid- to late spring. Easily confused with oystershell scale which is larger and wider; Japanese maple scale also has purple eggs. See Univ. of Maryland factsheet: <https://tinyurl.com/JMapleScaleUMD>



Japanese maple scale adults (John Davidson/Bugwood); top of next column: oystershell scale adults for comparison (Darren Blackford/Bugwood)



Lily Leaf Beetle—adults and eggs in Onondaga, Westchester and Suffolk Cos.

Monilinia Blight (37)—on flowering cherry. The two fungi causing "brown rot" of peaches also are the culprits causing flower and shoot blighting on flowering cherry trees, showing up soon after bloom. Optimum temperature for infection is around 75°F. The fungi overwinter on fallen mummified fruit and, especially in areas with milder winters, on blighted shoots, flowers, and mummified fruit remaining on trees. Fungicide application is done as flowers open, with a second application after 10 days (or according to label).



Monilinia blight on Kwanzan cherry (Margery Daughtrey)

Rabbit Injury (241D)—large areas of bark were stripped from the base of schip laurels in Suffolk Co. Junipers were also injured in the same landscape. This is one of a number of cases that we've heard of where rodents took advantage of snow cover to feed higher than usual on the trunks or branches of shrubs. Mice can also cause similar damage.



Feeding of a large rodent at the base of Prunus laurocerasus (Mike Gaines)

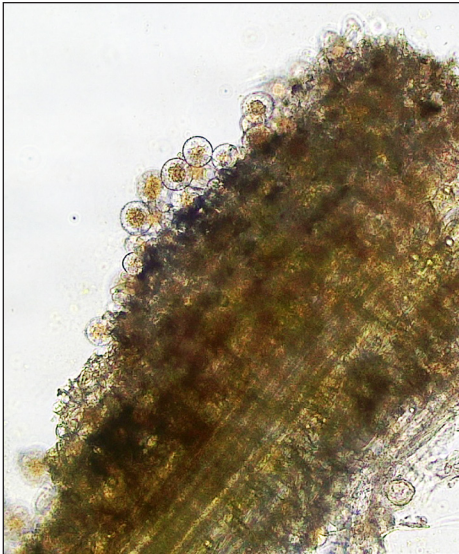
Volutella Blight—on boxwood in Tompkins Co. See also “Under the Scope” section.



Boxwood leafminer along with *Volutella blight* (Elizabeth Lamb)

Under the Scope: Reports from Diagnostic Labs

Deschampsia Smut—the spores of a smut fungus were observed on spotted leaves from Suffolk Co. This the second case seen on this grass in the landscape in recent years; overhead watering favors the disease.



Smut spores from *Deschampsia* at high magnification (Margery Daughtrey)

Volutella Blight—There are two different species of *Pseudonectria* that can cause this canker disease on boxwood. Typically leaves are discolored and eventually turn straw-colored in areas of the canopy and are retained on the plant. Observations made on a case of this disease in Tompkins Co. suggest that the fungus there is likely the less-reported *P. foliicola* rather than *P. buxi*, based on the lack of setae in the sporodochium. Investigations will continue so that the pathogen may be accurately identified to the species level.



Top: *Pseudonectria* sp. on boxwood leaf. Above: spores under magnification (Chase Gabriel Mayers)

Miscellany

M-Pede, Kopa Insecticidal Soaps as deer repellent: M-Pede and Kopa Insecticidal Soaps have 2(ee) labels in NY on “all labeled crops” as a deer repellent at the 2% rate. Consider all usual precautions, including avoiding use on drought-stressed plants and when temperatures exceed 85°F. See 2(ee) labels on NYSPAD and have copies on hand if using as deer repellents.

New insecticide for basal trunk spray: Travella SG, a formulation of dinotefuran (similar to Safari), was recently registered in NY as a basal trunk application to ornamental trees and shrubs in nurseries, landscapes, tree plantations (including Christmas trees) and forests to control a wide variety of listed pests (adelgids, aphids, flatheaded borers, lacebugs, leaf beetles, leafhoppers, mealybugs, pine tip moth, psyllids, roundheaded borers, scales, whiteflies, some others). Note maximum per-acre use rate. Foliar application to indoor ornamentals and vegetable plants also allowed; no other label uses are permitted in NY. Users should have completed the required neonic course before application (<https://tinyurl.com/NYNeonicCourse>).

Spring Fling: CleanSweepNY western NY spring collection of pesticides, fertilizers, paints, chemicals May 5 - 8 Erie, Niagara, Monroe and Seneca Counties for farmers, owners of former farms, and all types of certified pesticide applicators and technicians. Pre-registration required! Deadline to

register April 27. More at <https://tinyurl.com/mumaxuky>



CleanSweepNY collection (Dan Gilrein)

Polyester (cellophane) bees—named for material they use to line underground burrows, these gentle solitary bees can form large colonies in sunny sandy sites with sparse vegetation and are not defensive around nesting sites, typically located near host trees. Our most common species seen this past week, unequal cellophane bee (*Colletes inaequalis*) is a mid-spring pollinator visiting red and silver maples and other early flowers. One report from Beltsville, MD found them active March to the third week of May, disappearing the rest of the year.



Polyester (cellophane) bee “nests” (Jeffrey Colon, Landscapes by Jeffco)

How low can you go? As southern insects push further north, some are surviving more regularly as winters trend milder. However, the region's low temperatures this past winter, particularly late January to early February (including low single digits on eastern Long Island) say “not so fast!” Check your observations against findings from research, e.g.: over 75% of common bagworm eggs die when exposed to 1.4°F for 24 hours. One model of southern pine beetle cold tolerance predicts nearly 100% of adult, larvae and pupae but only around 70% of prepupae die after exposure to 0°F (you

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may find dead larvae under bark now). Redbay ambrosia beetle is particularly intolerant of cold: at 23°F 85% were killed after 10 minutes and 100% after 24 hours. Though tolerant of cold in general, recent crapemyrtle bark scale samples from Long Island's South Fork had 100% of overwintered eggs as well as many nymphs dead, though a few live nymphs did remain. Many hemlock woolly adelgids die at -4°F, but some will survive and we're waiting to hear more about observations, including biocontrols, around the State. In recent Long Island samples, they seem to have survived just fine. Remember snow cover can provide protective insulation to insects overwintering beneath, and insect populations can rebound rapidly, so expect any reprieve to be temporary.

Phenology by County

Monroe: shadblow, katsura, larch

Onondaga: forsythia, star and saucer magnolia, Norway maple, redbud, Callery pear, azalea, shadblow, river and white birch, flowering cherries, European gooseberry

Rockland: river birch, dogwood, eastern cottonwood, redbud, flowering quince, PJM rhododendron, peach, sassafras, hornbeam, bridalwreath spirea, shadblow, river birch

Suffolk: forsythia, saucer magnolia, peach, Norway maple, shadblow, Callery pear, weeping Higan and Yoshino cherries. PJM rhododendron, Japanese kerria, redbud, flowering quince

Tompkins: cherries and Kwanzan cherries, forsythia, Bradford pear, star magnolia

Westchester: lilacs, willow, pear

Dan Gilrein, Karen Snover-Clift, Margery Daughtrey & Shari Romar, editors

Growing Degree Days

As of April 22, 2026

Station	GDD ₅₀	Station	GDD ₅₀
Albany.....	138	Ithaca.....	112
Binghamton.....	160	New Brunswick,NJ.....	268
Boston, MA.....	74	Poughkeepsie.....	190
Bridgeport, CT.....	114	Riverhead.....	156
Buffalo.....	113	Rochester.....	144
Central Park.....	269	Syracuse.....	159
Farmingdale.....	135	Watertown.....	59
Hartford, CT.....	167	Westchester.....	174
		Worcester, MA.....	100

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State of the State of New York's Forests

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation Forest Health Staff (images courtesy of the authors unless noted)

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) works intimately with our state lands. We are always looking for emerging insect pests and diseases and developing new ways to detect and mitigate them. Here are a few things that we have been keeping an eye on in the past year:

Oak Wilt

Seven new oak wilt infection centers were detected in the Finger Lakes region in 2025 – primarily south of Canandaigua Lake. All detections were confirmed by the Cornell Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, with investigations revealing that each site had tree wounding that likely facilitated infection.



Oak wilt damage

Two sites near powerlines were treated through contracted removals, while all remaining infected trees were cut and herbicide-treated by Forest Health regional staff to prevent root-graft spread. Quarantine boundaries have been expanded in Yates and Ontario Cos. to include the towns of Middlesex, Italy, and South Bristol and parts of Bristol and Naples. Meanwhile, the lack of positive detections near the original infection in Glenville (Schenectady Co.) has led DEC to lift the quarantine established there in 2018.

Red Pine Scale

In 2025, DEC staff visited 16 sites to determine the extent and severity of red pine scale (RPS) and sampled plots at 12 of those sites to quantify red pine health in both plantations and natural stands. Red pine scale was confirmed at 8 of 16 sites mainly centered around the 2024 detection near Hague (Warren Co.). Red pine plantations had much lower live crown ratios than natural stands, and higher degrees of flagging were observed at lower live crown ratios. Average flagging was also significantly higher in sites that had red pine scale, and higher in plantations than natural sites suggesting that red pine in overstocked plantations may be more susceptible to this pest. Surveys will continue in 2026 to try and connect southern Hudson Valley detections

from the 1980s with the 2024 Lake George detection and elucidate how this pest has moved across the landscape.



Adult female red pine scale.

Laurel Wilt

Laurel wilt (*Harringtonia lauricola*) is a lethal vascular wilt of the Lauraceae, vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). In June 2025, a member of the public in Northport (Suffolk Co.) reported rapid wilt and mortality of sassafras to the Cornell Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center (LIHREC). LIHREC worked with partners to confirm the pathogen through culture and molecular analysis. In the same month, a private arborist from Bartlett Tree Experts reared redbay ambrosia beetles from symptomatic material. The Forest Health Program, working with partners, rapidly mobilized a coordinated survey effort. By the end of the season 2025, 3,295 plants (2,415 sassafras and 880 spicebush) were surveyed across Long Island and Upstate New York. Most plants (78%) were asymptomatic, with 742 reported as wilting or dead, though this likely overestimates the prevalence of laurel wilt due to difficulty distinguishing it from other stressors. Of the 25



Vascular streaking of laurel wilt..

sampled locations, 10 sites in Huntington, Smithtown, and Brookhaven (Suffolk Co.) tested positive for laurel wilt. To date, all infected sites are located inside Suffolk Co.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) has been in New York State since at least the 1980s, and to date has been confirmed in 54 of 62 counties. In 2025 HWA was confirmed for the first time in Essex Co., near the shore of Lake Champlain approximately 50 miles from the nearest previously known infested stand. To mitigate impacts of this forest pest, DEC implements chemical treatments and works with the NYS Hemlock Initiative (NYSHI) to research and implement biological control. *Laricobius nigrinus* and *Leucotaraxis* sp., both predators of HWA native to the Pacific Northwest, are the main species released and monitored in NY. In the summer of 2025, Forest Health and NYSHI staff confirmed the first establishment of *Leucotaraxis argenticollis* in NYS. Summer monitoring of *Laricobius nigrinus* showed significant dispersal and establishment in the lower Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains. There are now established populations of this predator in 11 counties with a field insectary well established at Harriman State Park.



Hemlock woolly adelgid ovisacs.

Beech Leaf Disease

Beech leaf disease (BLD) continues to spread rapidly and is now found in all but the three most northerly counties in the state. DEC and Parks staff surveyed over 126,000 beech trees from 2020-2025 with 45% of surveys resulting in positive detections in 2025. Despite the rapid spread and continued decline in beech health, we have not yet observed widespread mortality. Of the limited beech mortality we have observed in our 23 long-term monitoring plots, most had coinfections. BLD is the subject of much collaborative research across the state including preliminary surveys of BLD resistance, research with academic partners on understanding the biology of the associated nematode, and chemical and silvicultural treatment/mitigation options. Natural chemical treatments such as BioSAR and polyphosphite have shown limited success in mitigating symptoms. We are also testing efficacy of silvicultural treatments such as beech understory removal and canopy thinning in mitigating BLD; 2025 marked our first post-

treatment survey and we will continue to monitor for four more years.



Beech leaf disease

Spruce Budworm

In 2025, Forest Health began monitoring for spruce budworm (SBW) after a Canadian flight model indicated large numbers of moths blowing into northern NY in summer of 2024. Summer pheromone traps at several northern sites recorded extremely high moth counts --the highest reported anywhere in the Northeast. Maine's Forest Health Program has noted that high trap counts can precede visible outbreaks by several years, so we view these results as an early warning rather than a sign of immediate defoliation. To better understand the level of risk going into 2026, staff have been conducting larval sampling to look for overwintering larvae. This work will help us track potential impacts in the Adirondacks, with a focus on monitoring and evaluating both the ecological benefits and potential risks of SBW disturbance.



Spruce budworm (Neil Thompson, University of Maine at Fort Kent, Bugwood.org)