



BRANCHING OUT

An Integrated Pest Management
NEWSLETTER
for Trees and Shrubs

Volume 33 No. 5 June 5, 2026

Spruce Spider Mite (52,53)—on arborvitae in Westchester Co.

Broad-leaved Trees and Shrubs

Andromeda Lacebug (204)—adults and frass on andromeda in Westchester Co., nymphs in Suffolk Co.



Andromeda lacebug adults and frass (Hillary Jufer)

Anthracnose (52) & Botrytis (35)—on Kousa dogwood in Westchester Co.



Anthracnose and botrytis (Hillary Jufer)

Aphids on Hornbeam—pale green aphids on European hornbeam this past week in Suffolk Co. are either *Myzocallis coryli* or *M. carpini*. Nearly identical, we're awaiting adult samples to confirm which. Great photos, info about these & other aphids at <https://influentialpoints.com/>

Contents...

Scouting Report

Conifers: Balsam Twig Aphid, Green Spruce Aphid, Juniper Scale, Spittlebug, Spruce Spider Mite.....1

Broad-leaved: Andromeda Lacebug, Anthracnose & Botrytis, Aphids, Aphid Galls, Azalea Leaf Gall, Beech Leaf Disease, Boxwood Leafminer, Boxwood Psyllid, Cottony Camellia Scale, Cottony Maple Leaf Scale, Eastern Tent Caterpillar, Eriophyid Leaf Galls, Euonymus Scale, Fourlined Plant Bug, Frog-eye Leaf Spot, Hydrangea Leaf-tier, Iris Leaf Spot, Iris Rust, Leaf Scorch, Phyllosticta Leaf Spot, Powdery Mildew, Quince Rust, Rose Rosette, Rust/Pear Trellis Rust, Spotted Lanternfly, Viburnum Leaf Beetle, Volutella Blight, Whitefly.....1-3

Feature: Laurel Wilt & Redbay Ambrosia Beetle in NY.....Insert

Under the Scope: Boxwood Mite, Gymnosporangium Rust.....3

Miscellany4

Phenology, Growing Degree Days, Supporters.....4

Thank You to Our Scouts and Diagnosticians

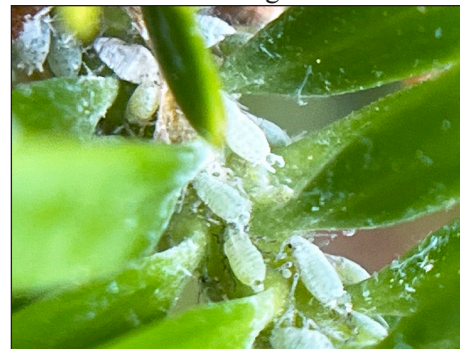
Amy Albam, Carol Bradford, Dawn Dailey O'Brien, Don Gabel, Sandra Jensen, Hillary Jufer, Karen Klingenberg, Elizabeth Lamb, Jen Lerner, Jessica O'Callahan, Zaidee Powers, Alice Raimondo, Mina Vescera, Mike Voss, Sandra Vultaggio

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

Balsam Twig Aphid (33)—on *Abies firma* in Suffolk Co.; ladybeetle seen feeding on aphids. On Canaan and Concolor firs in Livingston Co.



Balsam twig aphids (Michael Voss)

Green Spruce Aphid (34F)—on Norway spruce in Livingston Co. Probably *Cinara formicula*, which are not necessarily green; spruce is the only host.



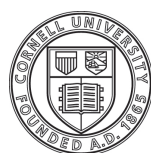
Green spruce aphids (Pay DePuy)

Juniper Scale (46)—crawlers in Westchester Co.

Spittlebug (202)—unidentified species on hemlock in Erie Co. and on *Pinus densiflora* and *P. strobiformis* in Tompkins Co.



Spittlebug on hemlock (Steve Castrogiovanni)



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Aphid Galls—probably from “oriental grass root aphid” (*Tetraneura nigriabdominalis*) on *Ulmus* in Onondaga Co.



Aphid galls on elm (Carol Bradford)

Azalea Leaf Gall (124)—due to the fungus *Exobasidium vaccinii* in Rockland Co. Physically remove galls before they become coated with white sporulation.

Beech Leaf Disease—in Passaic Co. (NJ) and across Long Island. Trees treated with Broadform or Arbotect 20S are showing reduced symptoms.

Boxwood Leafminer (94)—adults active in NYC, Westchester Co.; pupae and emerging adults in Suffolk Co.



Boxwood leafminer, mainly pupae, ready to emerge (Dan Gilrein)

Boxwood Psyllid (137)—nymphs in Rockland Co.

Cottony Camellia Scale (164)—suspect this species forming egg masses on azalea in Westchester Co. Possibly same species forming egg masses on Japanese snowbell in Westchester Co.



Cottony camellia scale on Japanese snowbell (Hillary Jufer)

Cottony Maple Leaf Scale (162)—adults on linden twigs in Suffolk Co., white egg masses on leaves in Westchester Co.



Cottony maple leaf scale adults (Miguel Ramos)

Eastern Tent Caterpillar (76)—on cherry in Ulster Co.

Eriophyid Leaf Galls—on black cherry in Suffolk Co. *Eriophyes (Phytoptus) cerasicrumena* forms spindle-like pouch galls on the upper leaf surface. *Prunus serotina* is the only known host. The cherry gall azure caterpillar feeds on these galls (and on other plants).



Eriophyid leaf galls (Sandra Vultaggio)

Euonymus Scale (186)—crawlers in Westchester Co.

Fourlined Plant Bug (190)—nymphs in Westchester Co.

Frog-eye Leaf Spot—in Tompkins Co. on crabapple. Heavy spotting noted on tree located next to cedars with rust. Logical to assume rust on alternate host but purple margins with tan center more



Frog-eye leaf spot (Elizabeth Lamb)

typical of frog-eye versus rust's brighter red-orange lesions.

Hydrangea Leaf-tier—caterpillars of a small moth, *Olethreutes ferriferana* formed these pouches on *H. arborescens* in Passaic Co. (NJ).



Hydrangea leaf-tier (Don Gabel)

Iris Leaf Spot—in Suffolk Co. *Cladosporium iridis*, the all too common pathogen of German bearded iris, causes oval, brown leaf spots. The initial tan spots with water-soaked margins may develop dark brown rims and yellow haloes later. (Older names for the fungus are *Heterosporium* and *Didymellina*). Both rhizomatous and bulbous irises are susceptible. Using sunny sites, gathering up plant leaf debris in the fall and using trickle irrigation are helpful for minimizing these leaf spots. If using fungicides, strong spreader-sticker action is needed on iris' waxy leaves.



Iris leaf spot (Melissa O'Donoghue)

Iris Rust—*Puccinia iridis* is now forming spores in pustules on *Iris versicolor* (Northern blue flag) in Suffolk Co.



Iris rust (Kimberly Simmen)

Leaf Scorch—on various broadleaved woodies and white pine, along roadsides in Rockland Co. after paving during hot weather.



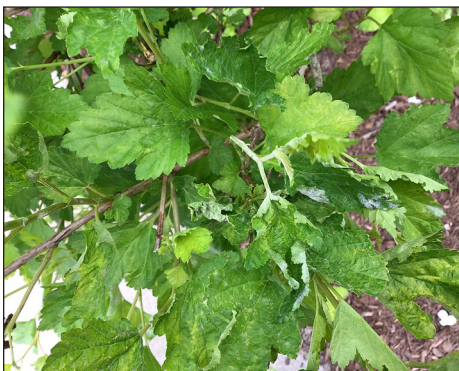
Leaf scorch (Amy Albam)

Phyllosticta Leaf Spot (20)—partially and entirely blighted, browned leaves found on a witchhazel infected by the fungus *Phyllosticta hamamelidis* in Suffolk Co.



Phyllosticta leaf spot (Rich Gibney)

Powdery Mildew (3-6)—leaf curl and patches of sporulation on ninebark (*Physocarpus*) affected by powdery mildew in Tompkins Co. The fungus overwinters in buds of this host.



Powdery mildew (Elizabeth Lamb)

Quince Rust (129-133)—orange telia of *Gymnosporangium clavipes* were seen oozing out from the trunk of an Eastern redcedar during a recent rainy spell in Suffolk Co. This rust fungus forms perennial cankers.



Quince rust (Peter Bouillane)

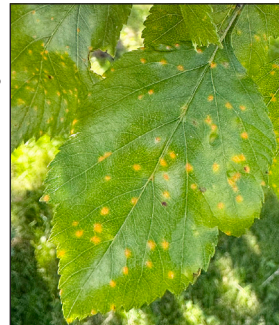
Rose Rosette—leaf distortion, witches' brooming and hyperthorniness noted on a climber in Manhattan. These symptoms indicate infection by rose rosette virus. Removing infected plants slows the progress of the disease within a garden.



Likely rose rosette (Mike Bieganeck)

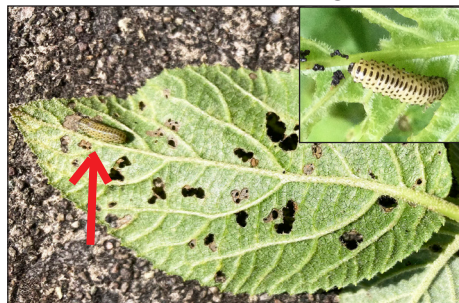
Rust (129-133)—spotting leaves on hawthorn in Westchester Co.

Possible hawthorn rust (Hillary Jufer)



Spotted Lanternfly—first instars in Westchester, Queens and Suffolk Cos.

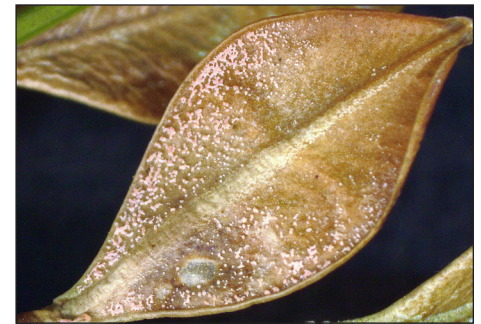
Viburnum Leaf Beetle (104)—larvae and leaf damage in Monroe Co. Also on *Viburnum trilobum* in Livingston Co.



Viburnum leaf beetle larva (arrow) and damage (Karen Klingenberg) Inset: viburnum leaf beetle larva (Pay DePuy)

Volutella Blight—characteristic salmon (sometimes whitish) sporulation on undersurface of brown foliage on

boxwood in Suffolk Co. We often see this associated (as in this case) with leafminer damage.



Volutella blight (Dan Gilrein)

Whitefly—in Westchester Co. on andromeda. ID unconfirmed but looks very much like



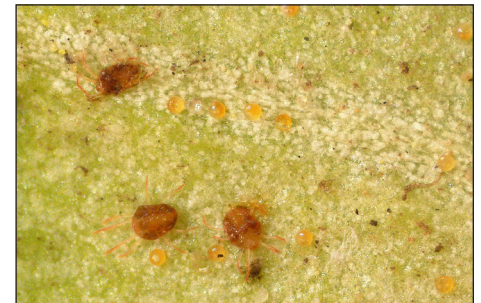
Whitefly (Hillary Jufer)

Crenidorsum sp. seen since 2023 in NYC on Japanese holly. We had a report last fall of huge numbers of a similar species on Japanese holly in Nassau Co.

Under the Scope:

Reports from Diagnostic Labs

Boxwood Mite (229C)—adults and eggs under leaves on boxwood in Suffolk Co. Szczepaniec & Raupp (2012) found systemic (drench) treatment with imidacloprid, often for leafminer, can be associated with higher mite populations.



Boxwood mite adults and eggs (Dan Gilrein)

Gymnosporangium Rust Lesion (129-133)—spore stage (tiny bumps) clearly showing on leaf of 'Burgundy' apple in Tompkins Co.



Gymnosporangium rust (Sandra Jensen)

Branching Out
 Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology
 Cornell University
 334 Plant Science Building
 Ithaca, NY 14853

Miscellany

NY Invasive Species Awareness Week June 8 - 14. Check out events and activities around the State at <https://nyis.info/ny-invasive-species-awareness-week/>

Efficacy Of Aphidoletes Aphidimyza Predator Releases to Control Aphid Populations on Linden Street Trees. On July 21 from 1 - 2pm (ET) Dr. John Whitney will present the 2023 John Z. Duling Grant Program TREE Fund webinar on work using biocontrol to manage linden aphid on street trees. Register at <https://treefund.org/webinars>

Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic Updates. Keep up to date on what we are seeing in the Clinic by following us on Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/cornell_plant_disease_clinic/



Phenology by County

Monroe: buckthorn, Stephanandra, rhododendron

Onondaga: horse chestnut, wisteria, white fringetree, snowball viburnum, tree lilac, weigela

Rockland: blackberry, Kousa dogwood, mock orange, mountain laurel, multiflora rose, Scotch broom

Suffolk: beautybush, redbud dogwood, sweetbay magnolia, ninebark, tuliptree, multiflora rose, smoketree, kousa dogwood

Tompkins: ninebark, lacecap hydrangea, rhododendron, viburnum

Westchester: weigela, Japanese snowbell, snowball viburnum, kousa dogwood, mountain laurel

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

Growing Degree Days

As of June 2, 2026

Station	GDD ₅₀	Station	GDD ₅₀
Albany.....	440	Ithaca.....	314
Binghamton.....	383	New Brunswick,NJ.....	747
Boston, MA.....	430	Poughkeepsie.....	531
Bridgeport, CT.....	469	Riverhead.....	559
Buffalo.....	365	Rochester.....	408
Central Park.....	737	Syracuse.....	428
Farmingdale.....	481	Watertown.....	249
Hartford, CT.....	503	Westchester.....	499
		Worcester, MA.....	356

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Laurel Wilt and Redbay Ambrosia Beetle in New York

Kelsey McLaughlin, Forest Health Research Pathologist, and Liam Somers, Forest Health Research Entomologist, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Bureau of Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health

Introduction

Working to preserve forest health is a collaborative effort, including everyone from the landowner, local extension officials, arborists, federal partners, state partners, universities and academics, and everyone in between. The first detection of laurel wilt (*Harringtonia lauricola*) and its vector, the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*), in New York was a similar collaborative effort.

It started with a landowner in Northport (Suffolk Co.), who called in her sick sassafras to the county's Cornell Cooperative Extension office in June 2025 which looped in the Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center (LIHREC). Staff from both institutions conducted a site visit. No one expected laurel wilt to jump this far north, as the nearest known infected areas are in Virginia and North Carolina, but when cultures looked similar to the fungus, additional labs at the University of Florida and USDA APHIS were called in to help verify the identity of this tree-killing pathogen. The NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Dept. of Agriculture & Markets (AGM) were alerted, and a working group was formed. At the same time, Bartlett Tree Experts were rearing redbay ambrosia beetles from infested bolts, confirming the presence of the vector as well. A new pathogen and pest species had jumped over 450 miles into New York, and the question on all of our minds was, "What now?"

Biology of Pathogen and its Vector

Laurel wilt was first detected in Georgia in 2002, and since then has killed millions of trees in the laurel family (Lauraceae) in the southeast. Affected trees include redbay, sassafras, and avocado, plus smaller shrubs like spicebush and swampbay. In New York, the only native hosts available are sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) and spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Not all plants with "laurel" in the name are hosts; for example, mountain laurel and Schip/cherry laurel are not hosts, not in the Lauraceae, and cannot be infected.

The laurel wilt fungus is moved from tree to tree by the redbay ambrosia beetle (RAB). Redbay ambrosia beetles are native to Asia and live symbiotically with the laurel wilt fungus. Like other ambrosia beetles, they feed on the fungus they vector rather than the wood itself. They're very small, ranging from 1.5-4mm, making them difficult to identify without magnification. They also create compacted, toothpick-like structures made of sawdust called "frass tubes" that protrude from the trunk as they bore into the

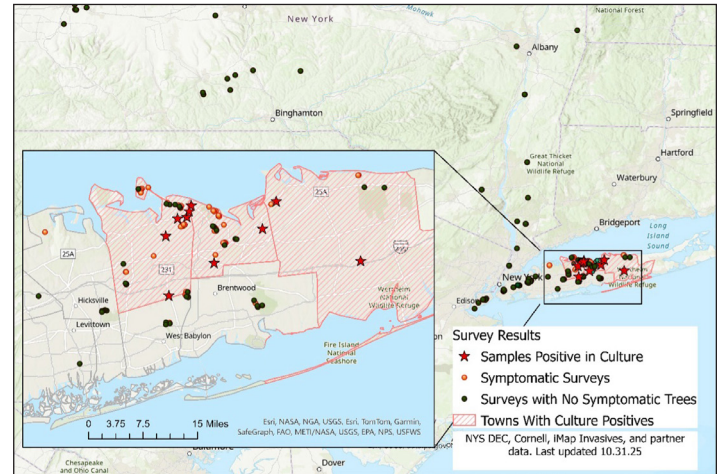


Figure 1: Map showing survey results from 2025 laurel wilt surveys. Only samples from Suffolk Co. were positive for the fungus.

wood. The males are flightless but females fly throughout the growing season, infesting even healthy host trees and shrubs.

State Response

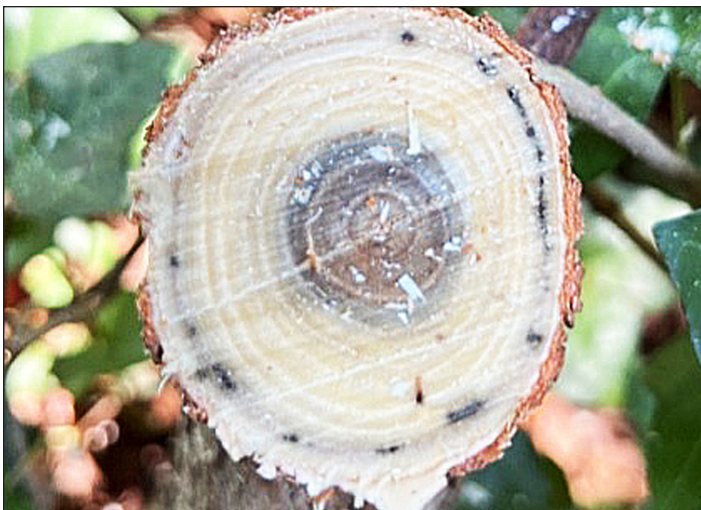
Once the pathogen and vector were confirmed in the state, all of New York's forest health protectors leapt into action. LIHREC and Cornell University Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic (PDDC) worked together to diagnose samples and confirm the disease in additional towns. They also reached out to southern partners who had been managing the disease for many years, to present an informative webinar for landowners and tree care professionals (recording available here: <https://tinyurl.com/bddzv89p>).

DEC and AGM both began surveys to delineate how far the pathogen had spread. DEC, the Long Island Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, and NYC Parks surveyed 3,295 host plants in forested environments across the state (Figure 1). AGM surveyed an additional 3,871 host plants in nurseries, and found that most hosts for sale in New York were grown locally, rather than being imported. New York's iMapInvasives database added laurel wilt as a reportable species, which allowed us to track new infection locations and receive 50 reports from the public. By the time the growing season ended three months later, three towns in Suffolk Co. were confirmed to have the pathogen. No infected trees were found outside of the County (Figure 1). At this time, we have only found infected sassafras, though spicebush has been found infected with laurel wilt in other states.

Symptoms and Reporting

We are concerned that laurel wilt will spread to other parts of New York and are actively seeking reports of laurel wilt-infected trees in 2026. Symptoms of laurel wilt affecting sassafras and spicebush typically appear starting in June as a wilt throughout the entire crown. Affected leaves turn olive or brown and droop. The wilt is often throughout the entire crown, with affected leaves turning olive or brown and drooping from the tree. This wilt happens very suddenly, in as little as two weeks. Cutting under the bark to the vascular system of the tree will reveal dark streaks, which are diagnostic for the disease. Small holes about the diameter of a paperclip wire can be observed on the trunk of infested hosts. Frass tubes may also be found on the trunk but are fragile and often crumble in the wind and rain. Many ambrosia beetle species also create these frass tubes and aren't reliable for identification of RAB specifically as other ambrosia beetles have been found attacking sassafras, but can be used as an indicator of beetle activity.

There is no cure for trees infected with laurel wilt. Management of laurel wilt focuses on slowing the spread of the pathogen and beetle as much as possible. To that end,



Symptoms of laurel wilt, including dark streaking in vascular tissue visible by cutting through bark or cutting a cross section. (DEC)



Top: browned, wilted sassafras trees infected with laurel wilt (DEC). Above: frass tubes from redbay ambrosia beetle (James Johnson, Georgia Forestry Commission, bugwood.org).

- **Learn to identify sassafras and spicebush**, the two host plants for the disease in New York. Sassafras is widely distributed on Long Island and is present throughout the Hudson Valley, and can be recognized by its three different leaf shapes. Spicebush is a smaller shrub with glossy, simple leaves and red berries in the fall. Spicebush is present across the state, mainly in wet or mesic areas in the understory. Both sassafras and spicebush leaves and twigs smell fruity when crushed.
- **Report symptomatic sassafras or spicebush** to iMap Invasives (<https://tinyurl.com/2p9rr9pf>), or contact the Forest Health Research Lab using our form (<https://tinyurl.com/4u67cdfu>), or at foresthealth@dec.ny.gov. Reports should include photos of the whole tree, the leaves of the tree, and the vascular streaking if possible.
- **Dispose of suspected infected material on site.** The best disposal to kill the majority of the redbay ambrosia beetles is chipping and using as mulch on site. If chipping is not possible, leave dead trees on site. Moving material from the site as firewood can transport the fungus and beetle to new areas.
- **Follow local quarantines** in Brookhaven, Huntington, Smithtown, Babylon, and Islip (Suffolk Co.). Do not move sassafras or spicebush material from these towns outside of the quarantine district.
- **Sample your own trees for laurel wilt** by contacting LIHREC or PDDC. Sample submission guidelines are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/mw26hplr>. If you do not own the trees, please contact the DEC or submit a report through iMap Invasives.

For more information please see DEC's webpage (<https://tinyurl.com/bpautcu5>) and Cornell's webpage and fact sheet (<https://tinyurl.com/5n7xjx5f/>).