



Georgia Forestry Commission Forest Health Highlights

October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016

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Summary:

The Forest Health Management Section provides unbiased forest health advice to landowners and forestry professionals across Georgia. Of Georgia's 37 million acres of land area, 98% of Georgia's 24.8 million acres is forest land under private ownership. Of this 24.8 million acres, 24.4 million acres is timberland available for commercial use - more than any other state in the nation.

<http://www.gatrees.org/resources/publications/GeorgiaForestFacts.pdf>

In 2016, Georgia Forestry Commission foresters incorporated insect, disease, or invasive species advise in 361 management cases involving 9,012 acres, and 178 Stewardship and Tree Farm cases with a total impact of 55,143 acres. Statewide, forest health personnel provided training to 5,586 Georgia citizens during 124 training sessions with foresters, resource managers, loggers, nurserymen, regulatory agencies, and landowners across Georgia.

We strive to create cooperative partnerships meeting the needs of all landowners and forestry professionals throughout the state.

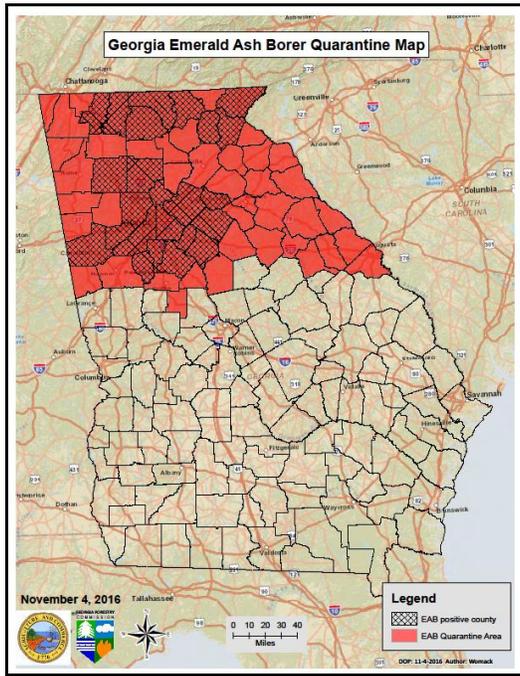
Special notes of interest:

Emerald Ash Borer:

Emerald Ash Borer was discovered in DeKalb and Fulton Counties, Georgia, in July 2013, and from trapping, EAB is now found in 23 counties: Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Fannin, Fayette, Gilmer, Habersham, Henry, Murray, Newton, Rabun, Rockdale, Union, Walton, White, and Whitfield Counties, with Gwinnett County added under the state quarantine to aid in the disposal of regulated ash articles.

In 2016, four new positive counties were added: Bartow, Gilmer, Rabun and Union Counties, which prompted the proposal of a regional quarantine by the Georgia Forestry Commission and the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Final approval for expansion of the regional quarantine was adopted on November 4, 2016 and the regional quarantine extends the existing quarantine across the original 23 counties in the Atlanta Metro Area, and all counties north of the Interstate-20 corridor and one county south of the Atlanta Metro quarantine area. The regional quarantine encompasses 63 counties cross north Georgia. The regional quarantine map can be found at the link below:

http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/eab/EAB_quarantine_map_11-4-2016_compr.pdf



Asian Gypsy Moth:

On September 25, 2015, a single, adult male Asian Gypsy Moth was identified in Garden City, Georgia. This federally regulated Asian Gypsy moth initiated an intense systematic grid survey on May 2, 2016 to determine if this moth was a single capture or if additional Asian Gypsy Moths are present. This survey was conducted by Georgia Forestry Commission personnel and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service partners, establishing 1,200 traps in the Savannah area as part of a three-year survey to determine if additional moths are present.

The Georgia Forestry Commission, Geographic Information System section introduced a real time, interactive, information collection system called “The Collector App.” which significantly increase production and reduce overall survey costs; modernizing our survey methods. This tablet-based collection system reduced field collection errors to near zero, which increased productivity and accuracy in completing the survey.

As of September 21, 2016, no additional Asian Gypsy Moth has been detected in Georgia.

Southern Pine Beetle Pheromone Trapping / Pine Beetle Aerial Survey

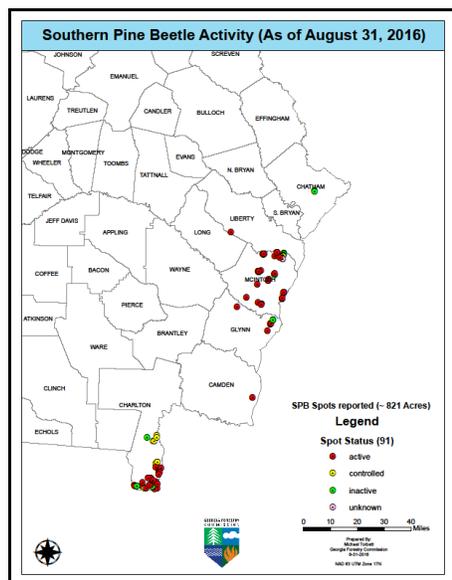
Southern pine beetle has the potential to cause more forest destruction in the southeastern states than all other forest pests combined.

In early spring 46 southern pine beetle prediction traps were set statewide. All prediction traps in Georgia indicated the potential for low southern pine beetle activity for 2016.

<http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/pine-bark-beetles/2016SPB%20Prediction%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

Based on trapping data, southern pine beetle activity was not expected. However, beginning in late May, Charlton and McIntosh Counties began to receive reports of southern pine beetle activity prompting a 30% statewide survey to detect the presence of southern bark beetle activity. Noticeable beetle activity was detected in coastal Georgia in Charlton County along the St. Mary River, and McIntosh County. Smaller southern pine beetle infestations were found in Camden, Glynn, Chatham and Liberty Counties.

Ninety-six southern pine beetle spots have been detected with 41 spots in Charlton County, 44 spots in McIntosh County, seven spots in Glynn County, two spots in Chatham County, one spot in Liberty County, and one spot in Camden County. Infestations ranged in size from 0.1 to 250 acres, with a total loss of 557.4 acres.



Southern Pine Beetle Outbreak 2016

Two counties had southern pine beetle outbreaks in Georgia. McIntosh County reported the first outbreak in March, which is very early for southern pine beetle in Georgia. The initial spot was 75 acres and was a spot that started the previous winter. This area experienced a very mild winter, which enabled the southern pine beetle to overwinter due to the mild conditions; this allowed for an early start for this infestation in 2016 and a very rapid spread. In late May two spots were reported in Charlton County, a 53 acre and a 25 acre infestation, that resulted in a 227 acre harvest to control the southern pine beetle infestation before it could spread across the tract. Several additional spots were reported in the same area, however, the first report was for the largest spot in Charlton County.

Local Georgia Forestry Commission foresters worked closely with landowners to help find loggers to assist in mitigating the damage due to southern pine beetle. Two landowner information meetings were held to educate the public about the pest. A total of 110 landowners attended the meetings, and timber buyers and consultants were present to help assist landowners with their questions and concerns.

Multiple spots were found to be inaccessible on Georgia's islands which made it difficult to conduct salvage efforts following the outbreak. Where feasible, the timber was salvaged, but in most cases the method used to help control the outbreak was "cut and leave." In some cases the area was in wilderness and nothing at all was done.

On November 8, 2016 Paul Merten, USDA Forest Service reported 139 Southern Pine Beetle infestations in Jasper, Putnam, and Jones Counties on the Chattahoochee - Oconee National Forests and surrounding private landowners. The Forest Health staff in north and central Georgia was notified of this possible outbreak. Ground and aerial surveys began on November 9, 2016 with the Georgia Forestry Commission Air Operations section working in cooperation with the Forest Health staff. Both USDA Forester Service and Georgia Forestry Commission personnel surveyed the areas to determine the extent of damage and cause of the outbreak.

On November 15, 2016, it was determined that this outbreak is due to the severe drought conditions in north and central Georgia, with an estimated 300 infestations across the National Forest. Many of the spots are ¼ acre or less, but there are multiple spots in the same area. Both the Georgia Forestry Commission and the USDA Forest Service determined the insect causing this outbreak to be Ips Engraver Beetle (*Ips avulsus*), the small Ips that normally hit the top of the tree, and both agencies are convinced this outbreak is not Southern Pine beetle.

Southern Pine Beetle Prevention and Restoration Grant Report (2003-2016)

The US Forest Service has provided federal grants in this program area for 14 consecutive years. These grants were primarily utilized for direct cost share payments to Georgia landowners to implement prevention practices to treat high risk stands and forest restoration practices. Of these grants totaling \$11.53 million, \$7.02 million has been obligated towards direct landowner payments under cost share practices treating over 289,000 acres.

Southern pine beetle cost share funds for 2016 were obligated towards southern pine beetle prevention practices exclusively. Landowner interest was great, and the funds were allocated in a period of weeks. Prescribed burning and pine release operations assisted landowners in producing vigorous growing and health pine stands to prevent southern pine beetle outbreaks. During federal fiscal year 2016, Georgia Forestry Commission foresters serviced 345 contracts covering 27,222 acres.

Heterobasidion root disease (Formerly known as annosus root disease)

Identification of widespread Heterobasidion root disease began in 2005 with widespread mortality in recently thinned pine plantations. The incidence of Heterobasidion root disease has declined with landowner education programs, recognition of high hazard sites, proper tree species selection, and improvements in application products and techniques to combat this disease.

In October 2014, it was announced Sporex[®] would no longer be produced, leaving only a water-soluble borate powder, such as Cellu-Treat[®] (disodium octaborate tetrahydrate) to treat the disease. Consultants reported successful treatments in thinned pine plantations with a high risk of Heterobasidion root disease, but research shows that Phlebiopsis gigantea treatments are showing better results.

Michelle Cram, Plant Pathologist, USDA Forest Service, continues to work diligently to insure labeling of Phlebiopsis gigantea, *P.gigantea*, for control of annosus root disease. The Georgia Forestry Commission continues to work with Ms. Cram, and with persistence, this label can be approved in the United States, as a new tool in the control Heterobasidion root disease.

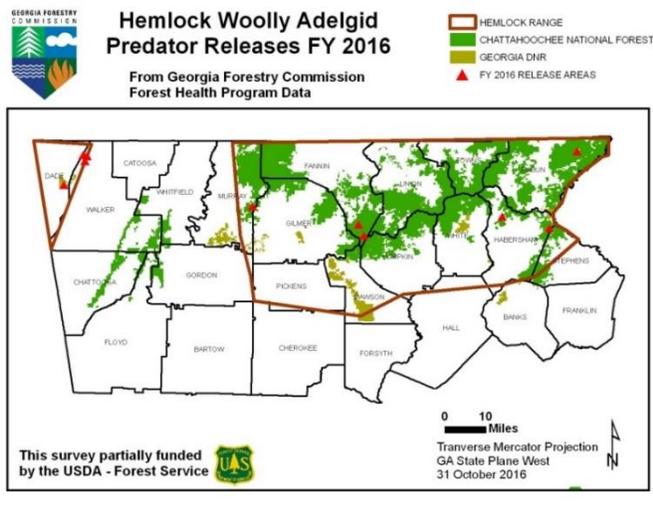
The Heterobasidion Root Disease brochure can be found at: <http://gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/annosum-root-disease/HRDBrochure.pdf>.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Hemlock woolly adelgid has spread throughout the entire natural range of hemlock in Georgia. Surveys focused on assessing predator beetle release areas and locating suitable foliage for predator beetle rearing labs.

The Georgia Forestry Commission provided assistance to predator beetle rearing labs at the University of Georgia, University of North Georgia, and Young Harris College. Activities included scouting for and collecting foliage for rearing, scouting and preparing beetle release locations, and releasing beetles. In 2016, 22 sites were scouting and 10 predator beetle release areas were selecting in the Blue Ridge, Cumberland Plateau and Upper Piedmont in the eastern regions of Georgia. Throughout the year 19 predator beetle releases were conducted on these sites. *Laricobius nigrinus* was released at

seven sites. *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* was released at seven sites, *Scymnus coniferarum* at eight sites, and *Laricobius osakensis* at one site. This was the first release of *Laricobius osakensis* in Georgia. In an effort to evaluate the success of this new predator, the Georgia Forestry Commission assisted the University of Georgia lab in placing traps monitoring *Laricobius species* populations. Seven samples were collected during the survey, and *Laricobius species* larvae were recovered from these samples.



The Georgia Forestry Commission assisted Cloudland Canyon State Park in delineating two predator release areas and coordinating with an Americorps crew to begin chemical treatment in the Bear Creek watershed.

Our goal is to continue developing partnerships with private land trusts, non-profit organizations, and other state agencies, to help survey and protect hemlocks across north Georgia. This advisory capacity provides freedom to work across private and state lands, helping volunteers with chemical treatment of thousands of trees, improves communication for surveying and protecting hemlocks through identification of current and future predator beetle release areas, and insures coordination of predator releases with chemical treatment.

Private landowners are offered a soil injector loan program which is extremely popular with homeowners. 16 injectors are available to landowners, including 10 kioritz injectors and six backpack injectors available in the following counties: Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Rabun, Union and Walker.

The GFC public website postings are continuously updated in an effort to relay this information.
<http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/hemlock-woolly-adelgid/>

Thousand Cankers Disease

This year marks the fifth year of pheromone trapping for walnut twig beetle (*Pityophthorus juglandis*) and trapping continued with 15 locations, focusing closely on the counties sharing boundaries with Tennessee and North Carolina.

All of the sites have trees with some degree of die-back. Five sites were in the Chattahoochee National Forest, one on state property, two on Tennessee Valley Authority land, one on National Park, one on municipal property and five on private property.

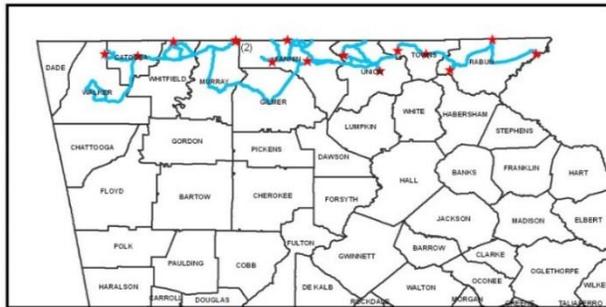
Results for all 2016 sampling periods are negative and no suspected thousand cankers disease has been found in Georgia.



2016 Walnut Twig Borer Survey

Pheromone Trapping
8/1 through 10/26
Two Week Sampling Periods
Results Pending

★ TRAP LOCATIONS
— VISUAL SURVEY ROUTES
July 13-15



Survey partially funded by
USDA-Forest-Service



Transverse Mercator Projection
GA State Plane West
31 October 2016

Sudden Oak Death

This marks the 12th year for sudden oak death early detection program surveys, with 10 watersheds chosen in north Georgia to monitor for the presence of the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*. Sampling targeted watersheds that include Georgia’s past positive nursery sites and watersheds with abundant new residential development in the metro Atlanta area.

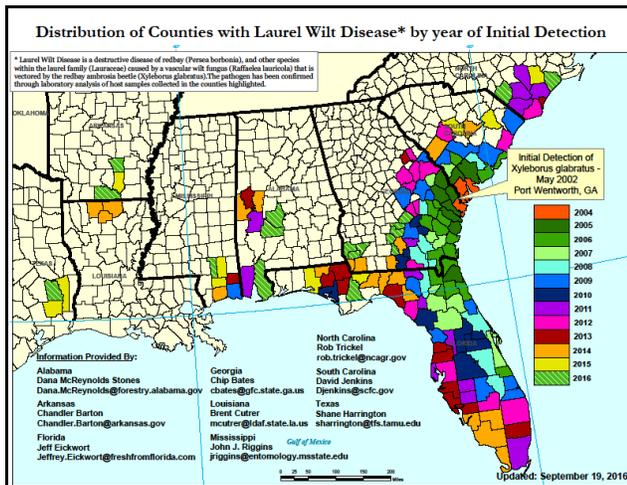
In 2016, special focus was placed on watersheds in the east metro Atlanta area. Six new early detection watersheds were selected that have had no early detection sampling to date. Four watersheds with positive nurseries, which were sampled from 2006 through 2010, were also revisited. Stream-baiting continued in two watersheds that have produced multiple positive samples in past years.

To date no *Phytophthora ramorum* has been identified in samples collected for 2016

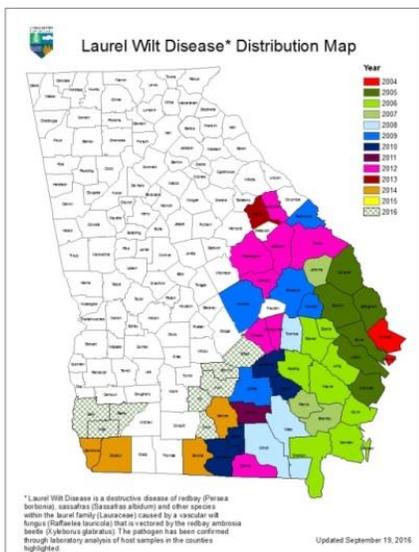
Laurel Wilt Disease

Laurel wilt disease was introduced at the Port of Savannah in solid wood packing material near Garden City, GA in 2002 and spread rapidly in Georgia and South Carolina GA by 2004. Since then, the disease spread throughout Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and is now killing redbay and sassafras in the coastal plain of North Carolina. Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas have documented infestations.

The spread of this disease has been tracked since 2005 with quarterly updates to the USDA Forest Service Southern Region web site under Forest and Grassland Health Spot Lights.



Laurel wilt disease is confirmed in 52 counties in Georgia, with new county detections, in southwestern Georgia, in redbay and sassafras. Positive detections were made in Telfair, Ben Hill, Irwin, Tift, Cook, Thomas, Grady, Mitchell, Baker, Miller and Early counties during the winter and summer of 2016. Surveys will continue in southwest Georgia during the spring of 2017, and efforts will be made to confirm new infestations near the border of Georgia and South Carolina.



The Georgia Forestry Commission continues to document the spread of this nonnative invasive insects and training continues to prepare foresters to monitor the movement of this pest across the United States and possibly Mexico. Training emphasizes the importance of restricting movement of materials that have the potential to spread forest pests.

Additional information on LWD can be found at the Georgia Forestry Commission home page: <http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/diseases/index.cfm>, and the USDA Forest Service Laurel Wilt website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r8/forest-grasslandhealth>

Invasive Weeds

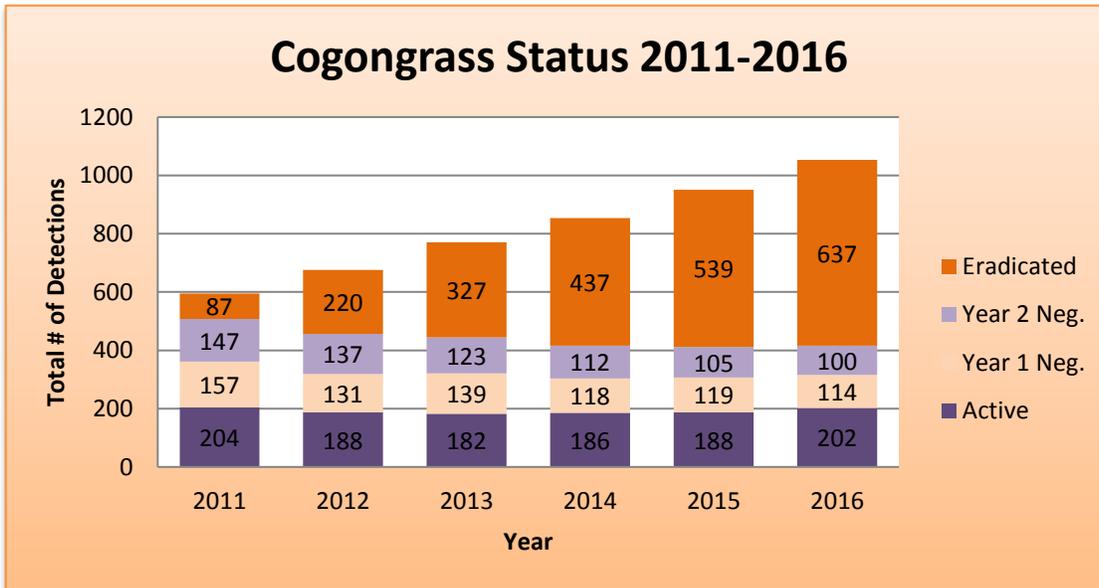
Cogongrass

Although many invasive plants cause problems within Georgia, the majority of our efforts have focused on cogongrass.

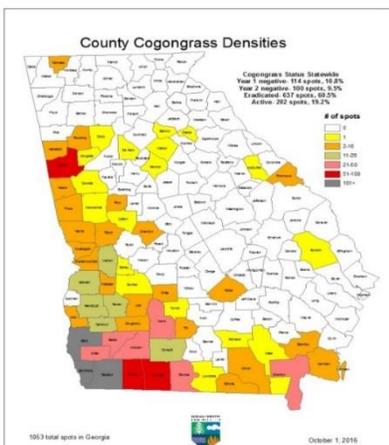
The GFC spearheads the cogongrass “Task Force” which is 23 state, federal and private partners that established the entire state of Georgia as a Cooperative Weed Management Area for cogongrass in May 2008. The combined effort of this group has had far reaching impacts in educating the public about cogongrass as well as helping to locate all infested sites. The education efforts has paid dividends and initial cogongrass reports are being filed from private landowners, industry foresters, and some logging operations. Forest health training was provided on 87 occasions with 35,289 attendees being reached.

101 new cogongrass infestation sites were reported and treated during 2016, which is a slight increase in new detections over the past three years. 59 Georgia counties have now identified cogongrass infestations involving 1053 sites across 270 acres. Schley County, located in southwest Georgia, was the only new county that Cogongrass was detected in 2016.

Most infestations in Georgia are approximately a quarter acre in size and all known sites have being treated at least once. Approximately 81% of all known sites are being reported as negative for cogongrass, and 637 sites have been declared eradicated.



The cogongrass epicenter is located in the southwest corner of the state with the majority of all new detections occurring in this region. The most infested counties in Georgia are Decatur, Early, Grady, and Thomas.



Herbicide treatments have been effective with the majority of all sites now being controlled within two-three growing seasons.

An information newsletter is posted semi-annually and is e-mailed to landowners and partners across the Southeast.

The Georgia Forestry Commission web site provides more cogongrass information. Connect to the link below: <http://www.gatrees.org/forest-management/forest-health/cogongrass/index.cfm> to view cogongrass information such as:

- ❖ [*Cogongrass in Georgia update*](#)
- ❖ [*Known cogongrass sites in Georgia map*](#)
- ❖ [*Cogongrass Density map*](#)
- ❖ [*Cogongrass percent inactive map*](#)
- ❖ [*Cogongrass in Georgia winter 2016 newsletter*](#)
- ❖ [*Cogongrass in Georgia spring 2016 newsletter*](#)

Weeds Report

Chinese privet

The Forest Inventory and Analysis survey for 2015 shows trends with nonnative privet across Georgia, and we continue to follow these trends through the “Dirty Dozen” list of invasive plants. To date there are approximately 640,000 acres of privet invading Georgia’s forests.

In 2015 Chinese privet and Japanese climbing fern dominated requests for assistance under the Invasive Plant Cost Share Program, with 80% of landowner applications requesting assistance combatting Chinese privet. This nonnative invasive plant continues to be a major competitor in wetlands and is still the number one invasive plant in Georgia in number of forested acres infested.

Controlling Chinese privet has proven simple using foliar applications of glyphosate (4 -7%), applied between October and January. This method has proven effective, with expectations of a nearly 100% kill by April of the following year.

Chinese tallowtree

Chinese tallowtree is native to China and Japan and was introduced in The United States during the late 1700’s. Each tree has the potential to produce thousands of seeds annually and these seeds are dispersed primarily by birds and flooding in riparian areas. Chinese tallowtree infests a total of 13,876 acres in Georgia.

To increase outreach and education, the Georgia Forestry Commission has installed field demonstration sites for landowners in Hahira, Georgia, Ossabaw Island, Laura S. Walker State Park, and with the Jekyll Island Authority to provide a hands on classroom to show proven techniques and labeled application rates of herbicides available to the general public.

Brazilian Pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*)

Brazilian pepper is native of South America and was introduced into Florida in mid-1800 as an ornamental plant. It was thought Brazilian Pepper could not establish in Georgia due to the colder temperatures, but a small infestation was identified in the summer of 2014.

Brazilian peppertree monitoring continues for a third year along the causeway leading to Jekyll Island, Georgia, where it was discovered and treated on June 25, 2014. Three different site evaluations were

conducted along the causeway in 2016, and each visit revealed no Brazilian peppertree. After three consecutive years of negative inspection this infestation is considered eradicated, but annual inspections by Georgia Forestry Commission county personnel will continue to insure total eradication.

Air Potato (*Dioscoria bulbifera*)

Air potato is an invasive vine from Southeast Asia which was introduced in Florida in 1905. The plant is similar to kudzu in the speed and manner in which it grows, climbing over and draping down on the plants it covers.

Air potato plant was introduced to the Georgia Forestry Commission as a pest of concern in Florida, now reports of this pest have been received from as far north as Pike County, Georgia.

The Georgia Forestry Commission partnered with the City of St. Mary's, Cooperative Extension, and Florida Department of Agriculture to conduct the initial biocontrol release of Air potato beetle (*Lilioceris cheni*) on seven different sites, to begin an integrated pest management program targeting Air potato. In July and August of 2016, an integrated pest management plan was developed and implemented using a combination of biocontrol with the release of 750 new Air potato beetles, an "Air potato roundup" and application of herbicide control. The herbicide treatment areas showed great success with very little collateral damage, and the results were as expected; immediate and dramatic. Leaf feeding was found during the inspections, indicating limited success with biocontrol methods, and the "Air potato roundup" did not return the anticipated results of removing large quantities of "potatoes" from the infested areas.

Dirty Dozen List of Invasive Weeds

2016 is our seventh year working with The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) teams developing data providing a defensible ranking of invasive plants. Since 2009 the "Targeted Watch List" of nonnative invasive plants did not change from year to year, and we are seeing trends in the total acres of our twelve worst nonnative invasive plant species that aggressively compete with and displacing native communities across Georgia.

The "Dirty Dozen List" continues to be a valuable tool in combating nonnative invasive weeds in Georgia.



Top Twelve Non-Native Invasive Plants 2015 Dirty Dozen List

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2009</u>
1.	Non-native privet	637,211	726,148	637,916
2.	Nepalese browntop	102,722	111,836	70,001
3.	Chinaberry	53,165	67,534	59,872
4.	Non-native lespedeza	36,470	41,069	40,630
5.	Kudzu	34,625	42,158	35,981
6.	Japanese climbing fern	21,152	20,563	16,271
7.	Non-native olive	18,765	18,506	17,090
8.	Chinese tallowtree	13,876	15,348	11,314
9.	Exotic rose	13,172	15,686	12,974
10.	Mimosa	11,318	18,344	15,420
11.	English Ivy	10,852	5,943	4,785
11a.	Wisteria	6,571	10,082	7,437
12.	Cogongrass* (Acres)(12/31/2015)	231	196	167

Invasive Species: Any plant or animal that has been introduced and aggressively competes with and displaces local native communities; normally having no native enemies to limit reproduction and spread.

Cogongrass spots are scattered across counties in Georgia and the Georgia Forestry Commission recognizes a spot as eradicated after three (3) consecutive years of finding no cogongrass sprouts.

The number of eradicated, one year negative, two year negative, and active infestations changes monthly, but overall approximately 80% of all known acres of Cogongrass are now negative.

Top 11 Non-native Invasive Species Removing Honeysuckle and Fescue.

* Georgia Forestry Commission Documentation. Cogongrass has not been recorded on FIA plots.



An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

In 2016, the GFC used the “Dirty Dozen” list as a criterion for The Invasive Plant Control Cost Share Program which assists landowners in the control of targeted species listed as major competitors to our native forests.

Invasive Plant Species Control Program

Addressing invasive species occurrence and control is a growing issue. Education of the public about the harm nonnative invasive plants can cause in Georgia has been conducted during the past year to bring relevant and current topics to the landowners of Georgia.

The Invasive Species Control Cost Share Program assists landowners in control of nonnative species by targeting specific invasive species to increase the amount of healthy, productive forests across Georgia. Georgia's efforts have focused on Chinese privet, Japanese climbing fern, Chinese tallowtree, Chinaberry, and Nonnative rose. The majority of the request, were provided for the control of Nonnative privet. Since the inception of the Invasive Species Control Cost Share Program 246 Georgia landowners have been served under this assistance program and 6,606 acres of nonnative invasive plants have been controlled.

Early Detection Rapid Response

In 2016, the Georgia Forestry Commission deployed traps around facilities accepting international cargo with solid wood packing material. During the annual warehouse survey, 12 sites were selected across the state to establish a total of 36 Early Detection Rapid Response traps. Twelve Lindgren funnel trap sites (36 traps) were deployed in the Macon, Cordele, Elberton, and Savannah areas for the detection of nonnative exotic bark and ambrosia beetles around warehouse sites identified as high priority sites.



Xyleborinus artestriatus, initially documented in 2010, was recovered in multiple traps in 2015 and 2016, suggesting this exotic ambrosia beetle is considered to be established in the Savannah area.

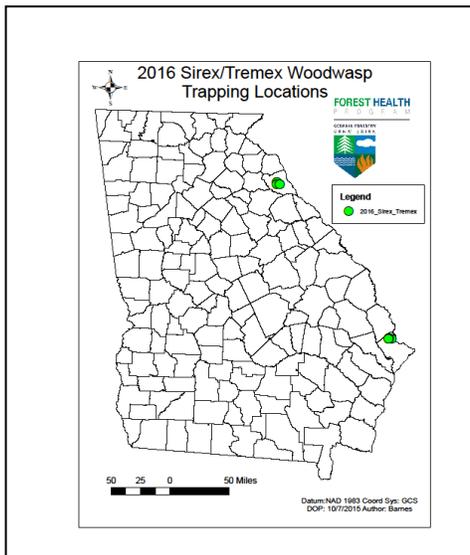
Ambrosiophilus peregrinus was first reported in 2014. During the 2015 and 2016 collection periods, no new records were documented for *A. peregrinus* but this insect remains a targeted specimen for identification during our 2017 trapping season.

In 2016 we visited 264 warehouses across the state, which included 44 new warehouse sites, and we received requests for identification of suspect insects from the warehouses. All suspects were taken to Rick Hoebeke, Collection Manager, Museum of Natural History, University of Georgia, for identification. None of the suspects were of concern. Having warehouse employees actively collecting insects that look unfamiliar is a very positive outcome. Five insect interceptions were reported in 2016, and identifications were made and information passed back to the warehouse employees.

Sirex / Tremex Woodwasp

International cargo shipments containing solid wood packing material pose a severe and present threat to our forests in Georgia, due to the possibility of nonnative invasive pests being introduced to the United States. The danger is that ports of entry are not the final destination for cargo, they are only the initial entry point. Containers can be shipped hundreds of miles from the port of entry prior to being opened.

The Georgia Forestry Commission is proactive in searching for new nonnative invasives that can harm our forest. Sirex woodwasp trapping is conducted in conjunction with trapping for Tremex woodwasp (*Tremex fuscicornis*) which was identified during warehouse trapping in Elberton, Georgia in 2012.



Sirex woodwasp (*Sirex noctillio*), remains a pest of high concern that has yet to be detected in Georgia. The Sirex woodwasp poses a threat to all of Georgia’s southern yellow pines and warrants monitoring through our Early Detection Rapid Response protocols.

Tremex woodwasp (*Tremex fuscicornis*) was introduced in Georgia through an international cargo shipment of granite with solid wood packing material that was transported to Elberton, Georgia, where live wasps exited the container and escaped into the surrounding woods.

A series of insect traps were deployed at high risk warehouses receiving solid wood packing materials near Savannah and Elberton, Georgia. Trapping began in June, and was completed the first week of October.

To date no *Sirex noctillio* or Tremex woodwasp have been captured.

Asian Gypsy Moth Survey

The Georgia Forestry Commission deploys traps to detect the presence of Gypsy Moth in Georgia. *The Asian Gypsy Moth is not established in Coastal Georgia or any other location in the United States and this multi-agency annual Gypsy Moth survey was conducted as a proactive effort to detect the presence of Gypsy Moth in the Savannah area.*

On September 25, 2015, a single, adult male, Asian Gypsy Moth was identified in an early detection trap near the Port of Savannah in Garden City, Georgia. This single detection of a federally regulated pest, Asian Gypsy Moth, in the vicinity of a port of entry produced an extended three year delimiting survey.

Following the Asian Gypsy Moth Survey and Response Guidelines, the geographic information system team develop a ten mile by ten mile grid surrounding the initial Asian Gypsy Moth detection location, and then introduced a near real time, interactive, information collection system called “The Collector App.” which improved our survey methods. This tablet based, information collection system reduced field collection errors to near zero and increased our productivity and speed in completing our job.

With the implementation of the “Collector App”, teams established 897 Gypsy moth traps along the Savannah River waterway from north of the Savannah International Airport to the mouth of the Savannah River at Tybee Island, Georgia, and to the south side of Savannah. Asian Gypsy Moth trapping began May 2, 2016, and all traps were removed September 21, 2016, no additional Asian Gypsy Moths have been detected in Georgia.

In addition the Forest Health Management team established limited pheromone baited traps in Catoosa County, near the Georgia/Tennessee line where two traps containing a total of three Gypsy Moth specimens were captured the previous year. Both of these trapping sites returned no suspect Gypsy Moth.

31 gypsy moth traps were established around the Port of Brunswick and on Jekyll Island. A single gypsy moth was collected at the Jekyll Island camp ground on June 9, 2016. This sample was submitted and confirmed as a European Gypsy moth.

Firewood Education and Outreach:

The Georgia Forestry Commission has formed a long term collaborative partnership with the Georgia State Parks Division of the Department of Natural Resources. The goal of this partnership is to encourage campers and travelers within Georgia, and visitors from out of state, to leave their firewood at home and buy locally harvested or certified firewood. The South-wide firewood education and outreach program presents a unified message concerning the dangers of transporting firewood, and this public awareness message has been disseminated to Georgia State Parks and to individuals using park facilities.

The majority of outreach has been through direct contact and educational programs at state parks to foster discussion, and change a mindset from an early age. In Georgia there are no mandates or regulations that prevent the long-distance transportation of firewood by a private citizen, but educational programs have sparked questions of "Why is transporting firewood bad?"

To drive the “Buy it Where You Burn it” theme home, the message is highlighted with outreach material and promotional items to be used in campers and at camp sites. These items are used by campground hosts, front desk check-in personnel, interpretive rangers, and park managers as a reminder of the importance of not transporting firewood.