

1994 Forest Health Highlights

Massachusetts

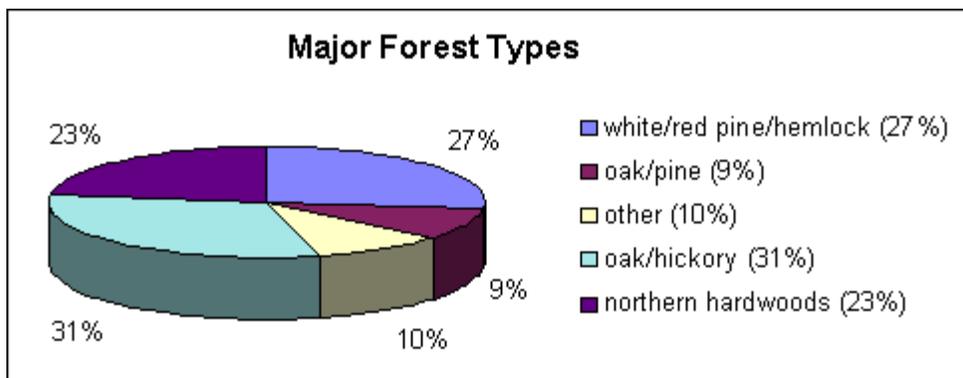
The Resource

The forest resource of Massachusetts has great demands placed on it. Although Massachusetts is thought of as an urban state 64% of the land areas is forested. This forested area is managed for a multitude of purposes including recreation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and a forest product industry.

- 64% of the state is forested (3,225,000)

Out of the forested area:

- 90.8% timberland
- 9.2% non commercial or reserved forestland



Special Issues

In 1994 the forests of Massachusetts experienced attack from several species of insects.

The **gypsy moth** which has caused defoliation for over 100 years continues to cause problems. This past year 76,000 acres experienced noticeable defoliation, with the majority of the damage located in the southeastern part of the state. In 1995 we expect defoliation to continue (although be less severe) in this area. There are strong indications that the population is under stress and the amount of acreage defoliated is expected to decline.

Another important defoliator is the **hemlock looper**, which caused 1,600 acres of defoliation in southern Berkshire County. Over the years, periodic outbreaks of the spring flying hemlock looper have been recorded. This has led to severe mortality in the hemlock stands. The species which has caused the defoliation in Berkshire County is the fall flying hemlock looper, which has never before been reported as causing damage in Massachusetts. Currently plans are being developed to conduct a suppression program in the area infested around the Otis Reservoir.

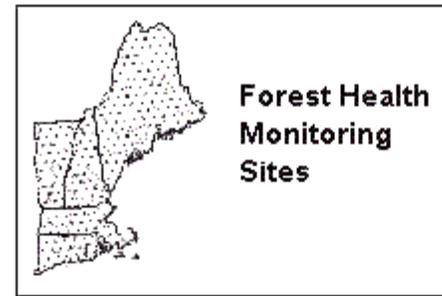
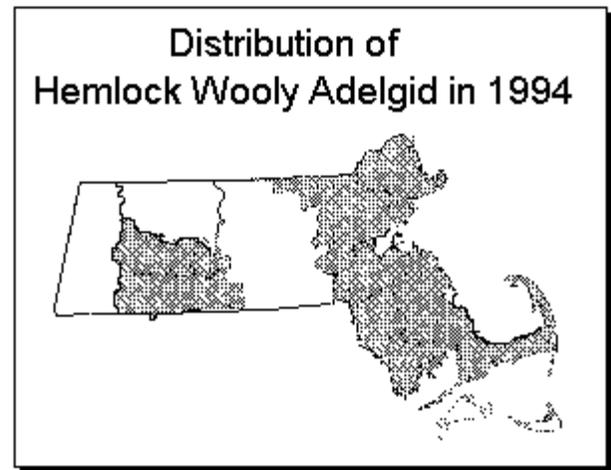
The **hemlock woolly adelgid**, which is reported to have caused considerable mortality to the hemlock resource in Connecticut, continues to spread. Since first identified in 1989 in the Forest Park section of Springfield, very little mortality has been recorded. The infestation continues to expand and is now located in 7 counties, with the most recent infestations being reported in Northampton, Seekonk and Holyoke.

Regional Surveys

Interest in regional forest condition prompted the implementation of the National Forest Health Monitoring Program and the North American Maple Project.

FOREST HEALTH MONITORING PROGRAM

The objective is to assess trend in tree condition and forest stressors. All of the New England States have been involved since the program was initiated in 1990. Results indicate that there has been minimal change in crown condition in the last 5 years. In 1994, 99 percent of trees greater than 5 inches diameter had normal crown fullness. About 96 percent of the trees had little or no crown dieback, and 78 percent showed no measurable signs of damage. The most common damage was decay indicators, which were more evident on hardwoods than softwoods. Additional surveys indicate there are concerns for individual species such as ash, butternut and hemlock due to various damage agents.



NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE PROJECT

This cooperative project with Canada was initiated in 1988 to look at change in sugar maple tree condition. There are several states in the Northeast involved including New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. Overall, sugar maple located within the sample sites are in good condition. Periodically, insect defoliation has affected crown condition in some areas. There was little difference found between sugarbush and non sugarbush stands.

For More Information

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