

1994 Forest Health Highlights

New York

The Resource

New York's forests provide a recreational base for millions of New Yorkers and others visiting the state's scenic regions. Forests are also productive in timber, providing employment to 2 percent of the workforce. The manufacture of wood products provides \$2.4 billion to the state's economy annually.

- 62% of the state is forested (18,641,300 acres)

Out of the forested area:

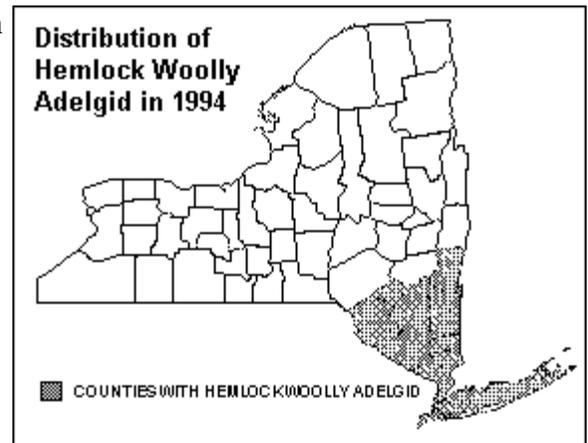
- 82.6% timberland
- 17.4% non commercial or reserved forestland (data unpublished)

Special Issues

Defoliator insects of every stripe are taking a toll of hardwoods, especially in southern tier counties. Forest tent caterpillar, elm spanworm, linden looper, fall and spring cankerworms, and gypsy moths are high on the list of culprits that strip trees of leaves and at times lead to tree mortality. In 1995, forest tent caterpillar may be the most destructive defoliator. Abundant egg clusters are seen from western New York to Hancock along the Delaware River. The infestation may be near record highs in 1995. It is the state's most destructive native insect.

Hemlock woolly adelgid is threatening the survival of eastern hemlocks in southeastern New York. Hemlock mortality is occurring as far north as Bard College and the city of Newburgh. The insect's spread northward is stalled at Clermont State Park in southern Columbia County. However, the insect is spreading westward and tree mortality is increasing within the generally infested area.

Another pest of growing significance in the state is the **pine false webworm**. In 1981, it occurred on only a few acres in St. Lawrence County. Since that year, the insect has spread rapidly. Now it is found on more than 500,000 acres in St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties and is only a short distance from Clinton County. White pine is particularly hard hit, but red and Scotch pines are also defoliated. Large-scale harvesting operations follow the defoliation to salvage dead and dying trees.



Other Issues

Butternut trees are being hard hit by a disease known as **butternut canker**. Once the tree was abundant in the state, but it is gradually dying out throughout its range. Not all butternuts appear susceptible to the disease, for occasionally healthy trees are found in diseased stands. Scion wood will be collected from healthy trees and grafted, and then planted at the State tree nursery to propagate butternut that may prove resistant to the disease.

Decline in abundance of flowering dogwood occurs throughout its' range in New York state. The reason for the decline is **dogwood anthracnose**, a disease that causes a lethal canker. Where once abundant, dogwood is found only sporadically and survivors are often heavily cankered. New infection centers for the disease were found in 1994 in the northern range of flowering dogwood in Rensselaer and Washington Counties.

Work is progressing on recovery efforts for American chestnut, stricken by a lethal fungus known as **chestnut blight**. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation is making planting sites available to the New York Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation to establish plantings of resistant trees throughout the state. Plantings are to be used for educational and research purposes. Genetic engineering may prove helpful in helping chestnut survive.

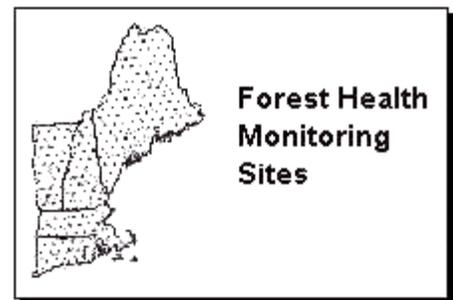
The **pine shoot beetle** is a newly introduced pest found in the western part of New York and other states surrounding the eastern Great Lakes. It is primarily found in Christmas tree plantations and a Federal quarantine has been implemented to reduce its spread.

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 hardwood 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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