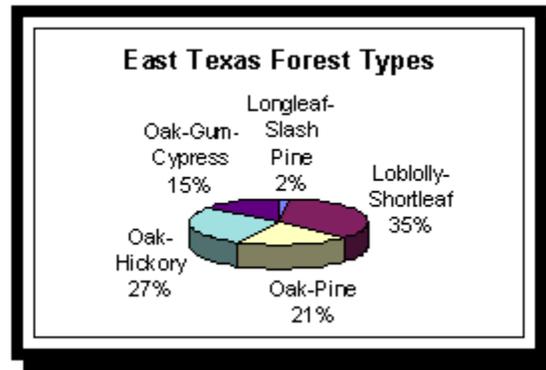


Forest Health Highlights 2000

Texas

The Texas Forest Service provides forest health protection assistance to state and private land managers within the State. The State and the USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection unit fund this program cooperatively.



Texas Forest Facts

- Over **50%** of the eastern section of Texas is **forested** (more than 12 million acres).
- Almost **90%** of the forested acreage in Texas is **privately owned**.
- There are four **National Forests (576,000 acres)** in east **Texas**. They provide recreational and wildlife benefits as well as forest products and jobs for thousands of people.
- The **southern pine beetle** (SPB) is the most important forest health insect pest in Texas. Historically, the most severe SPB problems in the South have occurred in Texas. However, since 1994, SPB populations in Texas have been very low. No SPB infestations were reported on state, private, or federal lands in Texas 1999 and 2000. This is the first time in almost 50 years that no southern pine beetle activity was reported in Texas for two consecutive years.
- For the third consecutive year (and four of the last five years), Texas has experienced **severe drought**. Seedling mortality was high on most tracts planted during the winter of 1999-2000 and *lps* (pine engraver) beetles activity was much higher than usual across all of East Texas.
- A new control for the **Texas leaf-cutting ant** was given a special local need registration by the Texas Department of Agriculture. A single application of Volcano™ Leafcutter Ant Bait will completely eliminate the ant colony in as little as four weeks. The bait will replace methyl bromide, a highly toxic, environmentally harmful, and more costly treatment for the ants.
- Personnel from the National Forests in Texas, Forest Health Protection, and the Texas Forest Service have worked together to develop some unique remote sensing applications to assist in the detection and monitoring of forest pest problems. The system has been called "**electronic sketch mapping**." A notebook computer connected to a touch screen monitor and a GPS unit is used in the airplane. The computer displays map or photo images of the area to be surveyed on the touch screen and the GPS provides a real-time location of the aircraft on the screen. The observer simply follows the image of the plane as it moves across the map or photo displayed on the screen. When the observer, for instance, sees a SPB infestation, touching the location on the screen image automatically records the location of the infestation. Then a drop down menu allows the observer to assign attributes to the infestation such as number of trees or other information. The system has great potential to aid SPB, oak wilt, and other detection procedures.

- **Oak wilt** continues to devastate over 60 counties in Texas, mostly between Dallas and San Antonio. Urban and rural oaks are affected. Live oak, the premier tree species in the region and highly valued for beauty, shade, and wildlife benefits, is severely impacted by the disease. The Texas Forest Service began its 14th year of a cooperative suppression project in October 2000. Since the Project's inception, more than 2.4 million feet (>468 miles) of barrier trenches have been installed with project assistance to treat 2,065 oak wilt centers to halt the spread of the disease.

The Texas Forest Service and the USDA Forest Service

The relative health of the forests in Texas is good. However, a variety of insects, diseases, and human impacts cause localized and sporadic concerns. The only exception to this is oak wilt, which has become a persistent problem in Central Texas. To deal with this changing mix of challenges, the Texas Forest Service and the Forest Health Protection unit of the USDA Forest Service cooperate to prevent, detect, evaluate, suppress, and manage this multitude of threats. The partnership between the two agencies has worked successfully for over three decades to maintain and improve the health of Texas' forests.

Forest Health Protection contributions (dollars) to the Texas Forest Service Cooperative Forest Health Program, cooperative pest suppression projects, and National Forests in Texas pest suppression projects, 1998-2001.

		<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Cooperative Forest Health Program		97,525	97,525	97,525	87,520
Forest Health Monitoring		0	0	0	71,000
Cooperative Suppression	Southern pine beetle	0	0	0	0
	Oak wilt	450,000	558,000	600,000	350,000
National Forests in Texas	Southern pine beetle	120,000	75,000	20,000	34,000

For additional information, contact:

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