

# Forest Health Highlights 2003

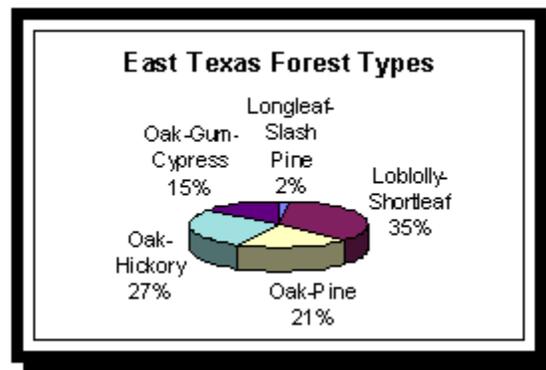
## Texas

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### The Resource

Texas' forests cover 14.6 million acres, more than half of the eastern section of the state where the climate supports trees. The majority of the state's forested land, some 10.7 million acres, is in nonindustrial private ownership, while approximately 576,000 acres are in national forests. Texas' forests are prized for their scenic beauty, supporting tourism and outdoor recreation and providing wildlife habitat throughout eastern Texas.

Major forest types in Texas include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine account for only 2% of the forest.



Forest health monitoring (FHM) activities are cooperative efforts between the USDA Forest Service and the Texas Forest Service. The FHM program in Texas includes periodic measurement of fixed plots as well as regular aerial and ground surveys to detect forest damage.

### Special Issues

Key issues which State and federal programs are addressing cooperatively include:

- Sustainable management of private forest lands
- Protection and development of urban and community forest resources
- Increasing participation by underserved citizens in forestry programs

### Forest Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB) is the most important forest insect pest in Texas. Historically, the most severe SPB problems in the South have occurred in Texas. However, since 1994 SPB populations in the state have been very low. No SPB infestations were reported in the state in 2003.

Pine engraver beetles (*Ips spp.*) displayed widespread but low activity in 2003. Because *Ips* infestations tend to be relatively small and scattered, they usually cannot be effectively controlled or salvaged, but their economic costs may exceed those caused by SPB.

The Texas leaf-cutting ant continues to defoliate young pines in East Texas. Baiting with Volcano® has reduced overall impacts from the ant.

Giant bark aphids that spread across most of East Texas in 2001 and 2002 had returned to low population levels in 2003. The aphids do not cause serious damage to trees.

The Texas Forest Service developed detection survey methodologies for exotic Formosan termites in 2003. Two types of traps were distributed in eastern and central parts of the state during May. Large numbers of adult termites were collected in Lakeview (Travis County), a new location record.

Oak wilt continues to devastate more than 60 counties in Texas, mostly between Dallas and San Antonio. Urban, suburban and rural oaks are affected. Live oak is a premier shade tree species in the region that is highly valued for its beauty, shade, and wildlife benefits; many prized live oaks have been killed by the disease. In 2003, the Texas Forest Service completed its sixteenth year of cooperative suppression of the disease, performing at least 5,692 oak wilt assists. No aerial surveys for oak wilt infection centers were conducted in 2003.

## **Forest Health Assistance in Texas**

For further information or assistance, contact:

### **Texas Forest Service**

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