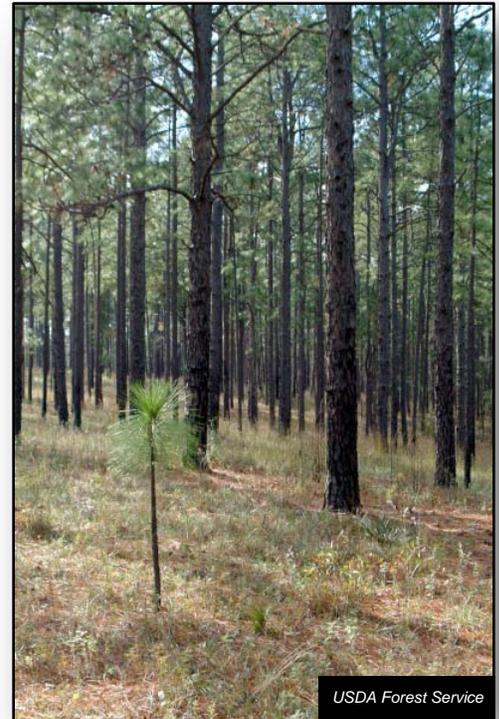
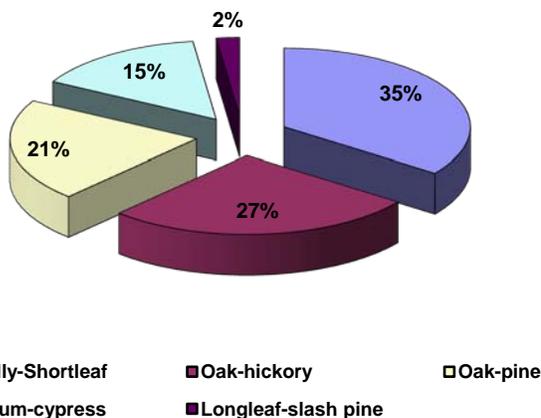


The Resource

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 non-industrial 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 loblolly-shortleaf pine, oak-hickory, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf-slash pine accounts for only 2% of the forest.



East Texas Forest Type Distribution



Forest Influences and Programs

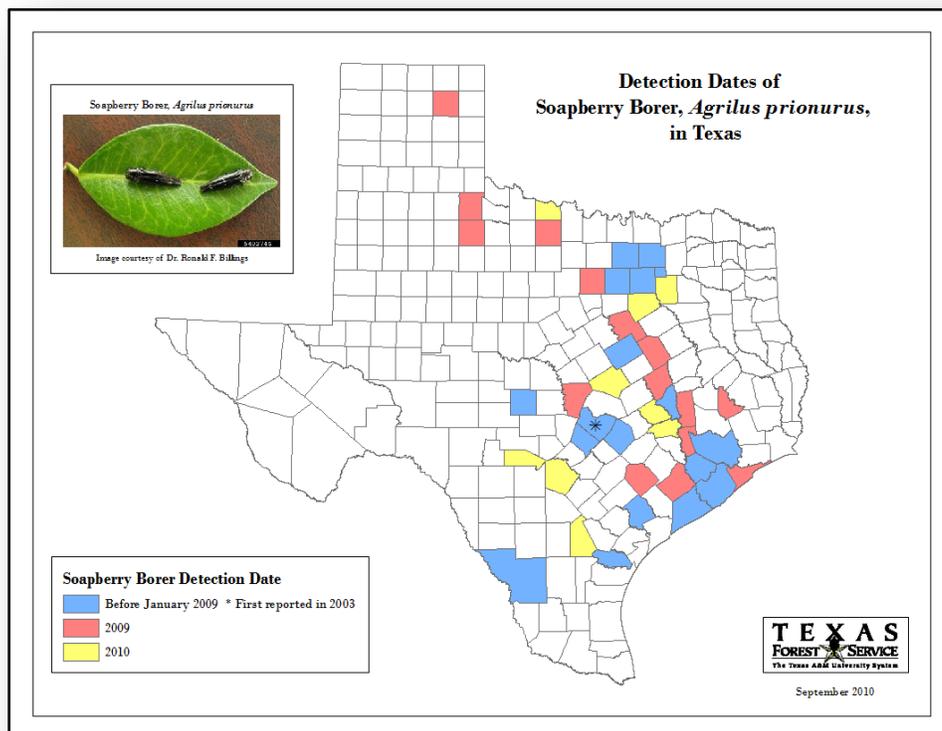
♣ The **Southern pine beetle (SPB)** is the most important forest insect pest in Texas. Historically, the most severe SPB problems in the South have occurred here. However, since 1994, SPB populations in Texas have been very low. **No SPB infestations were reported on state, private, or federal lands in Texas from 1998 through 2010.** A trapping system developed by the Texas Forest Service and now used in 16 southern and northeastern states is used to forecast annual SPB infestation trends. Traps are deployed in the early spring to predict SPB infestation levels for that year. Early indications are that southern pine beetle activity in 2011 will continue to be very low.

♣ Annual **rainfall** amounts for most of East Texas were 10-12 inches below long-term averages. This resulted in moisture stress in trees and caused an increase in some insect and disease activity. **Pine engraver beetles** (*Ips* spp.)

activity was reduced some from 2009 levels, but another dry summer saw additional engraver beetle activity in 2010. Texas Forest Service district offices as well as the Forest Health office in Lufkin took numerous calls from homeowners and landowners who were concerned about dying trees. Information about pine engraver beetles is available on the Texas Forest Service web site at the following URL: <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=1188>

♣ **Exotic invasive species** are gaining increased attention as a serious problem impacting forests. The new *Invaders of Texas* program is taking the message of exotic invasive pests to the general public by enlisting the aid of trained citizen scientists to detect and report invasive species in their neighborhoods. **Numerous articles** about exotic pests that are present or are potential Texas invaders have been prepared by Texas Forest Service forest health specialists and others and are posted at the Texas invasives partnership web site (<http://www.texasinvasives.org>).

♣ **Soapberry Borer**. A buprestid beetle has been attacking and killing western soapberry in some 42 counties in Texas generally from Dallas to Galveston to Laredo. In addition it has been reported from Roberts County in the NE Texas Panhandle. This buprestid is believed to be a Mexican species that has extended its range into Texas during the past seven years. No infestations have been reported in other states where western soapberry occurs as a native tree (i.e., LA, AR, MS, OK, NM, and AZ). A fact sheet discussing this pest has been posted on the Texas Forest Service web site (<http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=5316>) and the Texas Invasives web site (<http://www.texasinvasives.org/>). A full page alert about soapberry borer (SBB) appeared in the September 2009 and the July 2010 issues of *Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine* alerting the public to report this insect when it is found.



♣ **Saltcedar** (*Tamarix ramosissima*), or tamarisk was introduced into the United States over 100 years ago to minimize soil erosion. Since then, saltcedar has invaded many watersheds and riparian areas where it has become a major problem, particularly along parts of the Rio Grande and Pecos rivers in Texas. Mechanical and chemical controls have been used to try to manage this tree. More recently, biological control of saltcedar, using exotic leaf beetles (*Diorhabda* spp.) from Tunisia, Crete and Asian countries that feed only on trees of the genus *Tamarix* has proven successful as beetles have become established in several areas along the Rio Grande and Pecos rivers in West Texas. The beetle from Tunisia (*D. sublineata*) is very successful in defoliating saltcedar along the US and Mexican sides of the Rio Grande from Ruidosa (TX) to Big Bend National Park. BUT, Tunisian saltcedar beetles have created a problem along part of the Rio Grande River. When Tunisian beetle populations reach high levels on saltcedar, they attack and defoliate athel trees (*Tamarix aphylla*), a common ornamental

species that is planted for shade and as windbreaks along the Rio Grande (athel is exotic, but NOT invasive). Being another species of *Tamarix*, athel serves as an additional host for high populations of saltcedar beetles, causing concern to residents around Presidio, TX and Ojinaga, Mexico. According to “experts,” the outbreak of saltcedar beetles affecting athel trees along the Rio Grande should mostly disappear once the large stands of saltcedar are brought under control. In November 2010, the Texas Forest Service conducted a demonstration for officials from Texas and Mexico on how to inject athel trees with systemic insecticides to protect the trees from being defoliated by adults and larvae of the saltcedar beetle.

♣ **Oak wilt** (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*) continues to occur in over 70 counties in Texas, mostly between Dallas and San Antonio. Urban and rural oaks are affected. Trenches placed between diseased and healthy trees sever interconnected root systems and halt the spread of the disease. Texas Forest Service personnel contribute technical assistance to landowners to help minimize the impact of this tree disease. Technical information on oak wilt is made available via a web page devoted exclusively to oak wilt in Central Texas (www.texasoakwilt.org), developed by the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), the USGS National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII), USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the Texas Forest Service.



Forest Health Assistance in Texas

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