



Technical Bulletin

Forest Health
Notes # 5
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Laurel Wilt Potential Threat To Mississippi?

Exotics Continue to Invade Southern Landscapes: Laurel Wilt Potential Threat to Mississippi?

It is extremely important that we investigate any mortality events whether they are whole tree or branches. We are not only concerned with our commercial species but all components of the forested landscape. Even though we do not have great acreages of redbay (*Persea borbonia*) and other tree species in the Laurel family (Lauraceae) a deadly disease, laurel wilt has gained a foothold on the southeast coast. The disease is caused by a fungus (*Raffaelea* sp.) that is carried to and introduced into trees by the red bay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). In 2002 *Xyleborus glabratus* was first detected near Port Wentworth, Georgia as part of the USDA Forest Service Early Detection & Rapid Response Pilot Project. This is yet another of many insects that have been introduced into the United States with an associated fungus that causes tree mortality.

As the name implies, laurel wilt, the fungus plugs the water conducting tissue of the tree resulting in the characteristic symptom of wilt. This wilt is causing widespread mortality to redbay along in the Southeastern coastal plain. Our concern is that we have susceptible hosts in Mississippi. Currently the rate of spread is estimated at about 20 miles per year. This does not include the potential transport by man in firewood or other infested material nor through other introductions near our ports.

US Forest Service Forest Health Protection, Southern Region has provided an ideal website to obtain information concerning this potential threat. The website is located at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/index.shtml>.

If it is suspected that this insect/disease maybe present in your area please contact the Mississippi Forestry Commission in your area for assistance.

For additional information contact:

[Mississippi Forestry Commission](#)

[Local Office](#)

or

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