



# CAES

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Connecticut's Beech Trees Severely Impacted by Beech Leaf Disease Beech Leaf Disease Widespread and Severe in Connecticut and the Northeast

**New Haven, CT** - Scientists from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) are reporting that Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) has increased dramatically in both severity and distribution in 2022 compared to 2021. First detected in lower Fairfield County in 2019, BLD is now *widespread* on American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) throughout all eight Connecticut counties, with symptoms most severe in Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex and New London Counties.

Given that BLD is now widely established throughout Connecticut, ***reports of BLD to CAES and DEEP are no longer requested.***

Beech leaf disease is caused by the foliar nematode, *Litylenchus crenatae* subsp. *mccannii*. The nematode is currently known to cause disease on only American, European, and Oriental beech (*F. grandifolia*, *F. sylvatica*, and *F. orientalis*). Symptoms observed in foliage this year are the result of nematode migration in autumn from infected foliage into nearby buds, where the nematodes overwinter and reproduce.

The symptoms on beech foliage, best observed from below looking up into the canopy, are characterized by dark striping between leaf veins, as pictured below (left). Advanced symptoms observed this year include: aborted buds (i.e., no leaves

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emerge); distorted leaf enlargement; cupping, browning, and yellowing of foliage; branch and tip dieback; and in some cases, premature leaf drop.

Scientists at CAES have joined forces with researchers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Ontario (Canada), and at USDA-ARS to study disease development, transmission, and control.

Research on control options, conducted in Ohio, has shown some promise of recovery after five years of treatments of a phosphonate-based product. Property owners may wish to contact their arborist or tree warden about this option. Given that BLD is widespread in forests, where control is not applicable, the nematode that causes the disease will be an ever-present threat to landscaping trees; therefore, control treatments would be something to which one would commit over the long term.



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