



# CAES

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, September 23, 2022

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## **2022 Connecticut Oak Mast Survey Results**

**New Haven, CT-** The Connecticut Oak Mast Surveillance Program monitors mature trees (300 red oak group, 275 white oak group) in the 12 Deer and Turkey Management Zones across Connecticut and annually assesses acorn crop abundance during a 2-week period in August. The 2022 Oak Mast Surveillance Program was recently completed and determined widespread acorn crop failure for the upcoming Fall 2022 season, following an above average crop in 2021.

“Oaks are a foundational component of many forest ecosystems in southern New England and their health is directly correlated with the health of the forest,” said Joseph Barsky, lead forest researcher at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Acorns are a primary fall food source for over 80 wildlife species in our area, including white-tailed deer. Mr. Barsky warns Connecticut motorists to be wary this fall: “Without a consistent source of acorns, deer will wander in search of alternative food sources resulting in increased potential for collisions with vehicles.”

He also noted several challenges to the perpetuation of oak seedlings in southern New England including: regeneration failure due to increased browse pressure from locally high white-tailed deer densities, competition with interfering vegetation for available sunlight, and past widespread *Lymantria dispar* (spongy moth, formerly “gypsy” moth) outbreaks which have led to acorn crop failure and oak mortality throughout the region. Weather activity, such as the recent drought and past ice storms, have also negatively impacted tree vigor and health.

The Connecticut Oak Mast Surveillance Program was established by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Wildlife Division in 2007 and is coordinated along with six states throughout the eastern United States.

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