

2026 CT Forest Health Symposium



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Putting Science to Work for Society since 1875

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
March 10, 2026



Interagency Symposium

Research, monitoring, and management of forest health issues



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
State research institution

Cooperative Forest Health
State Plant Regulatory Official,
Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) – USDA APHIS PPQ



CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Forestry Division

State Forester,
All other Cooperative Forestry programs with the USDA Forest Service in CT



Foresters, land managers, and other forest health practitioners



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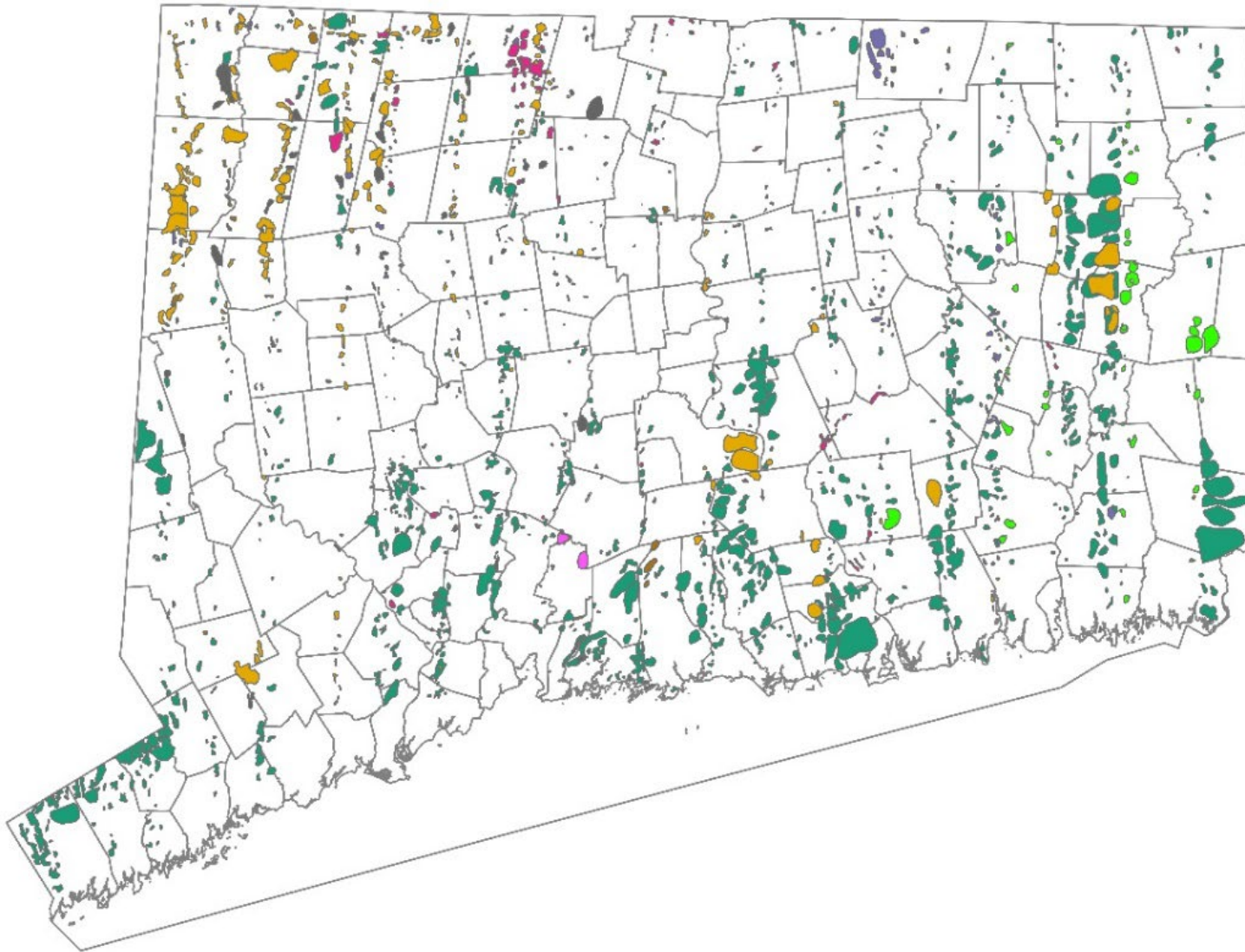
State Plant Regulatory Official,
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Environmental Science and Forestry

- **Eli Ward, Ph.D.**, *Forest Ecologist, CT Forest Health Program Coordinator*
- **J.P. Barsky**, *Certified Forester, Forestry Technician*
- **Jack Hatajik**, *Forestry Technician*
- New postdoc starting in August focused on assessing the effectiveness and ecological impacts of BLD treatments

Aerial Forest Health Survey

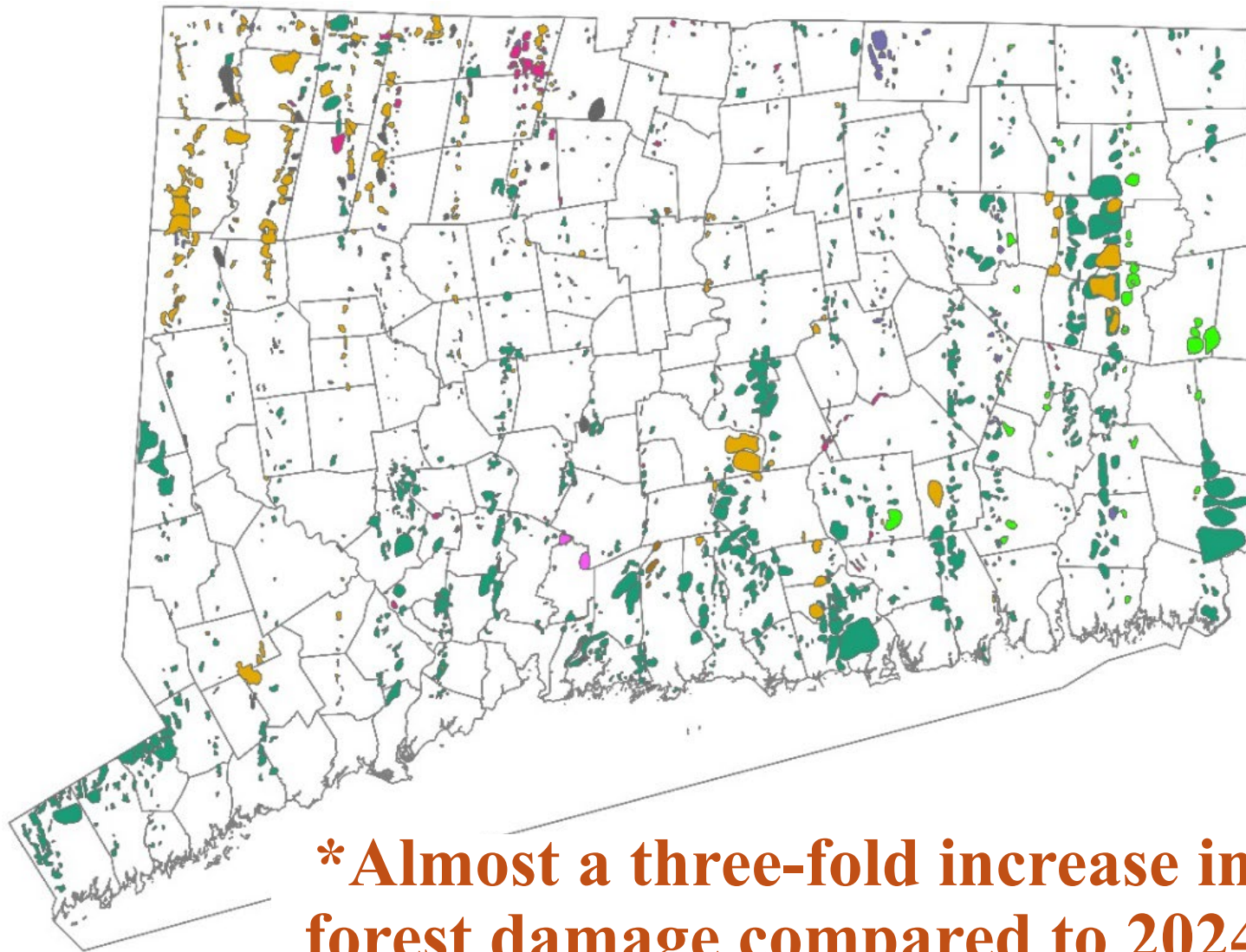
2025 Results



Damage causing agent	2025 Acres	2024 Acres
Beech leaf disease	158,717	37,829
Spongy moth	45,414	32,229
White pine needle disease	9,955	5,792
Winter Moth	9,551	NA
Hemlock woolly adelgid	7,643	730
Emerald Ash Borer	6,353	3,236
Other	3,099	2,398
TOTAL	240,732	82,214

Aerial Forest Health Survey

2025 Results

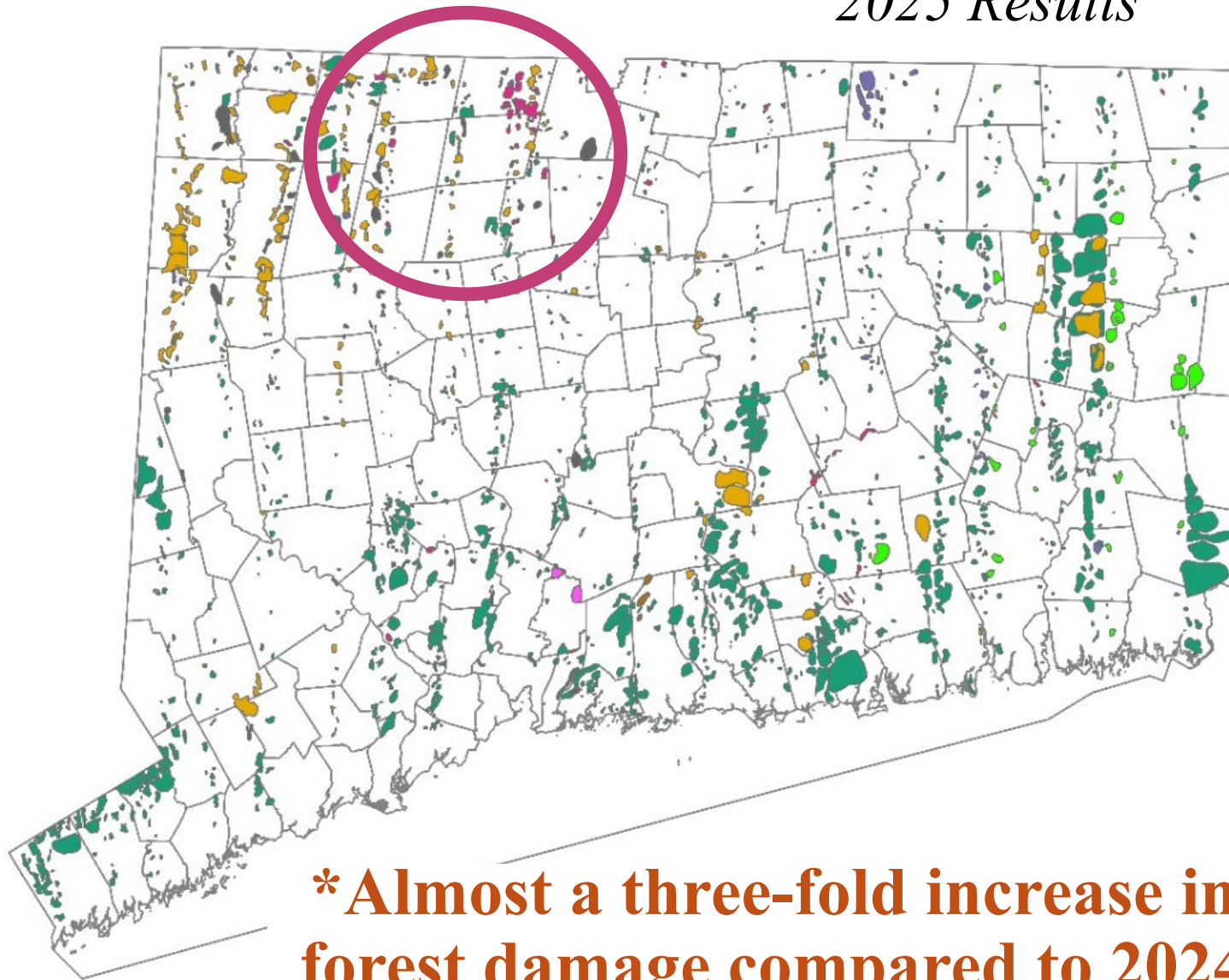


***Almost a three-fold increase in forest damage compared to 2024**

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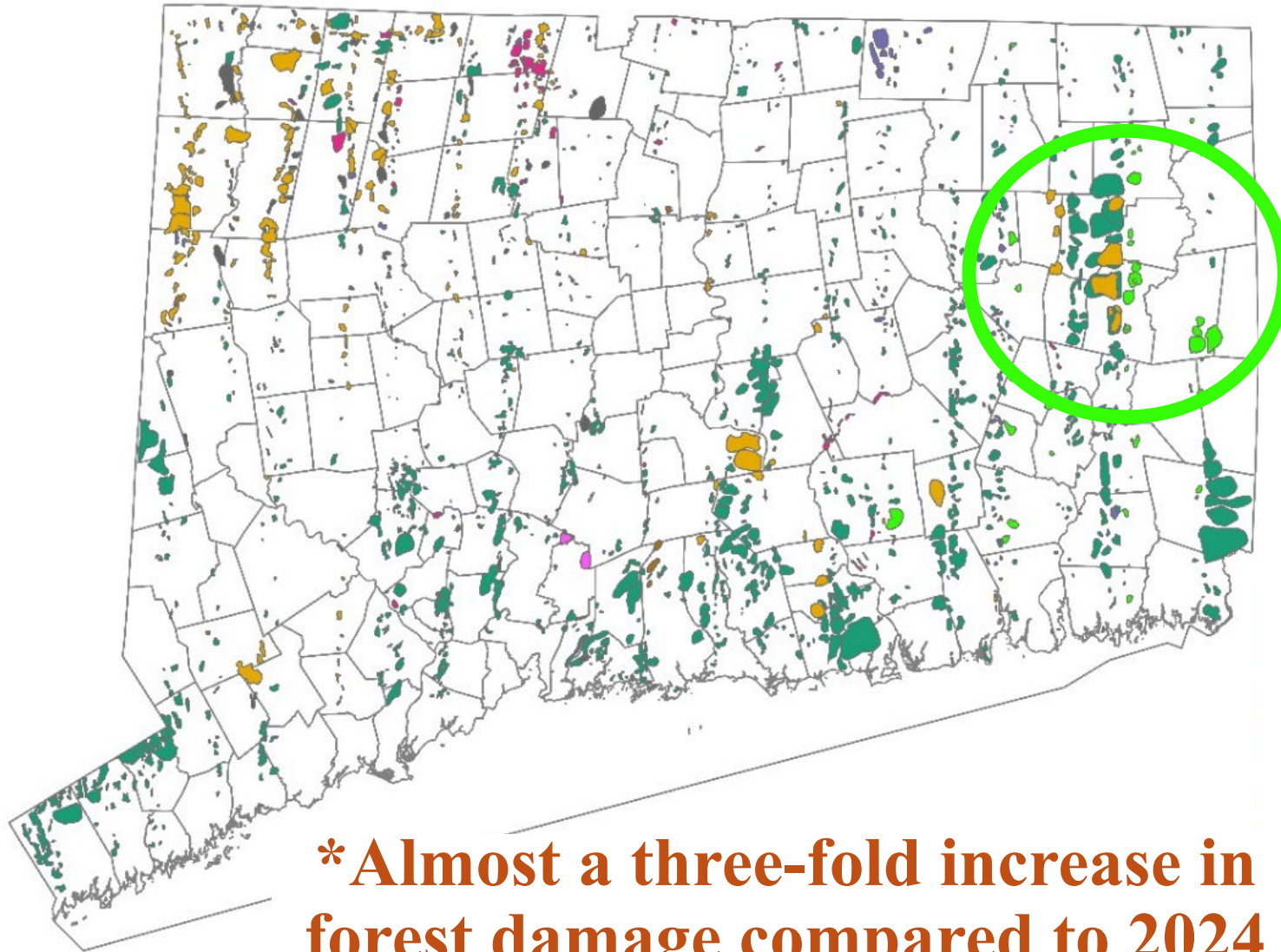


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AGENDA

CT Forest Health Symposium

March 10, 2026 | 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Jones Auditorium, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven

8:45-9:00	Coffee	
9:00-9:05	Jason White, Ph.D. <i>Director, CAES</i>	Welcome
9:05-9:25	Eli Ward, Ph.D. <i>Assistant Scientist and Forest Health Coordinator, CAES</i>	Introductions, CAES Forest Health updates
9:25-9:45	Andrea Urbano <i>Private and Municipal Lands Program Supervisor, CT DEEP Forestry Division</i>	DEEP Forestry Division updates
9:45-10:25	Chris Renshaw <i>Fire Chief/Associate Director University Safety Fire Department, UConn</i>	Wildfire preparedness in CT
10:25-10:40	BREAK	
10:40-11:20	Chris Johnston <i>Forester, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation</i>	Oak wilt monitoring and management in New York
11:20-12:00	Jonathan Rosenthal and Radka Wildova, Ph.D. <i>Ecological Research Institute</i>	Monitoring and managing ash (MaMA) program
12:00-1:00	LUNCH (BYO—light snacks provided)	
1:00 -1:30	Alana Russell <i>Forest Health Coordinator, RI Department of Environmental Management</i>	Winter moth monitoring and management in Rhode Island
1:30-2:00	Rich Cowles, Ph.D. <i>Scientist, CAES</i>	Beech leaf disease management options
2:00-2:10	BREAK	
2:10-2:30	Jack Hatajik <i>Forest Health Technician, CAES</i>	Tree regeneration and understory plant communities in the aftermath of emerald ash borer invasion
2:30-2:50	Susanna Keriö, D.Sc. <i>Assistant Scientist, CAES</i>	Chestnut blight biocontrol
2:50-3:10	Elena Karlsen-Ayala, Ph.D. <i>Research Plant Pathologist, USDA Forest Service</i>	Another day, another pathogen: Laurel wilt in the Northeast
3:10-3:30	Wrap-up	



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Entomology

- **Jacob Ricker, *State Entomologist***
- Tia Blevins, *Nursery Inspector*
- Jeffrey Fengler, *Nursery Inspector*
- Ella Natri, *CAPS Survey Coordinator*
- Paula Wolf, *State Apiarist*

State Entomologist Updates

Elm zig-zag sawfly

- No additional counties reported in 2025
 - Still scouting
- New Host?
 - Reports from Ohio, on Zelkova

Laurel Wilt

- No reports of LW or vectoring insect

Invasive Pest Reporting Tool

- Formerly for SLF, but expanded to include ALB and boxtree moth

Spongy Moth Egg Mass Survey

- Fewest EMs and Sites reported positive since 2019



Asian Long-horned Beetle

Pictures of Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB)
From left to right:
ALB larvae, adult ALB, and exit hole

Three images showing ALB larvae, an adult ALB, and an exit hole. The first image shows a yellowish, segmented larva next to a coin. The second image shows a dark, long-horned beetle on a wooden surface. The third image shows a circular exit hole in wood next to a coin.

Common Look-alikes of ALB

Four images of look-alike insects: Whitespotted Pine Sawyer, Broadneck Root Borer, Western Conifer Seed Bug, and Eyed Click Beetle. Each image is labeled with the insect's name.

What did you see?*

Adult Exit Holes Larvae



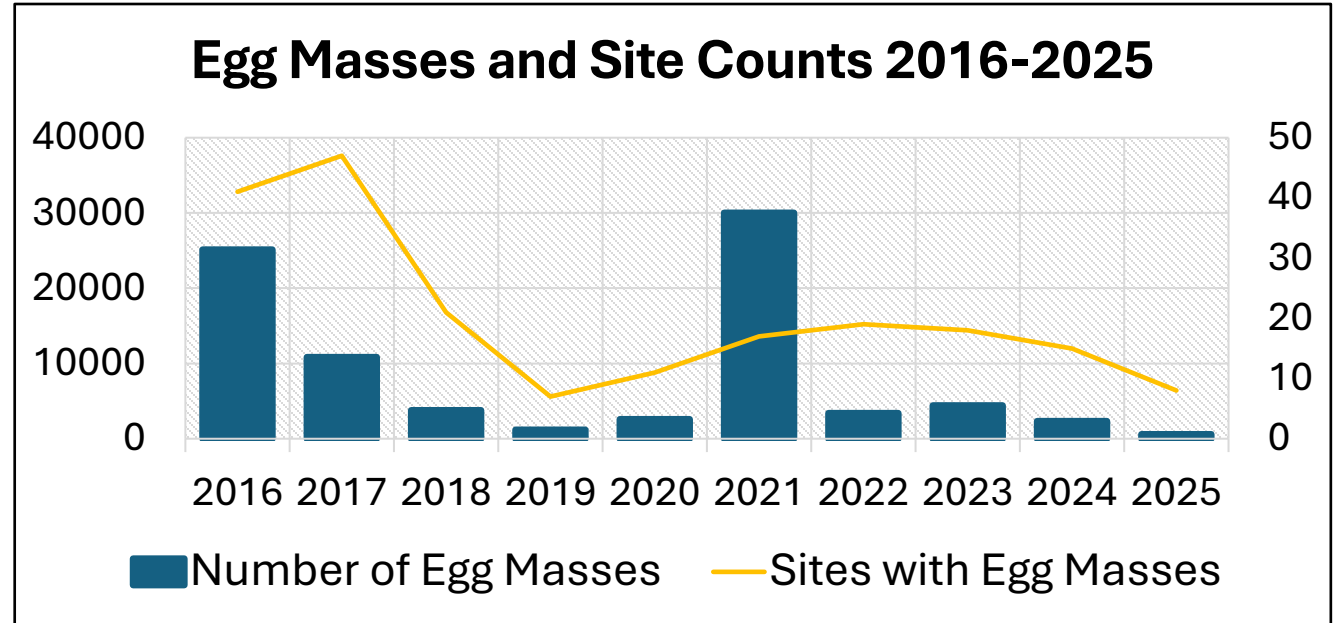
Spongy Moth – *Lymantria dispar dispar* Egg Mass (EM) Counts

Background:

- EM counts take place from November-March
- 103 Sites Across CT
 - Survey 1/16th of an acre (when found)

Other recorded data:

- Favorable host material
- Tree types



Site	Town	EM/Acre	County
L-4	Kent	288	Litchfield
L-6	New Fairfield	96	Fairfield
L-5	Sherman	64	Litchfield
H-1	Granby	32	Hartford
J-5	Woodbury	32	Litchfield
K-5	Washington	32	Litchfield

*Thank you to the team,
Tia Blevins, Jeff Fengler,
Ella Nastri, and Paula Wolf*

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Cooperative Forest Health

- 11 scientists across four departments with expertise in forest ecology, silviculture, pathology, entomology, nematology, invasive plant biology

Environmental Science and Forestry

- Dr. Eli Ward, *Forest Ecosystem Ecologist*
- **Dr. Susanna Keriö, *Forest Pathologist***
(Urban tree health, chestnut blight)

Entomology

- Dr. Claire Rutledge, *Entomologist*
(EAB, SPB, SLF)
- Jake Ricker, *State Entomologist*
(Spongy moth and elm zigzag sawfly surveys)

Plant Pathology and Ecology

- Dr. Robert Marra, *Forest Pathologist* (BLD)
- Dr. Raquel Rocha, *Nematologist* (BLD)
- Dr. Yonghao Li and Felicia Millett,
Plant Disease Information Office

Valley Laboratory

- Dr. Carole Cheah, *Entomologist* (HWA)
- **Dr. Rich Cowles, *Pathologist/Entomologist***
(BLD management)
- Dr. Nate Westrick, *Pathologist* (Oak wilt)
- Dr. Jatinder Aulakh, *Invasive Plant Biologist*

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Elisabeth (“Eli”) Ward

Forest Ecologist, CT Forest Health Coordinator

Email: elisabeth.ward@ct.gov

Website: <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES-WardE>

**Survey to suggest future presentation
topics or speakers:**

