



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

The New Kid on the Block: Laurel Wilt in New York State

Kelsey McLaughlin, Forest Pathologist

NYS DEC Forest Health Research Lab

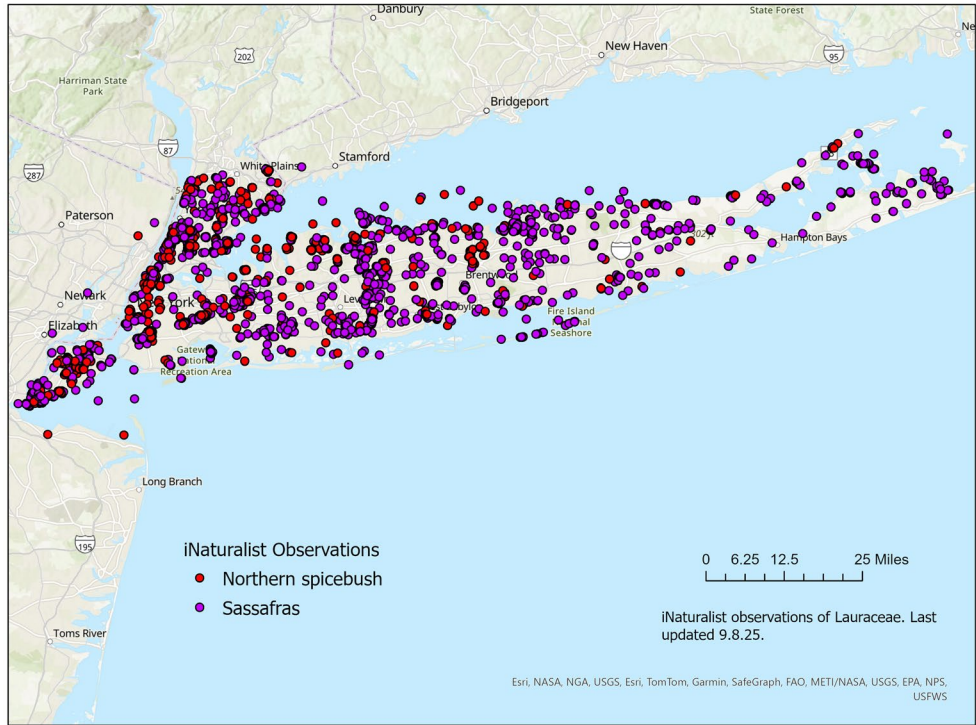
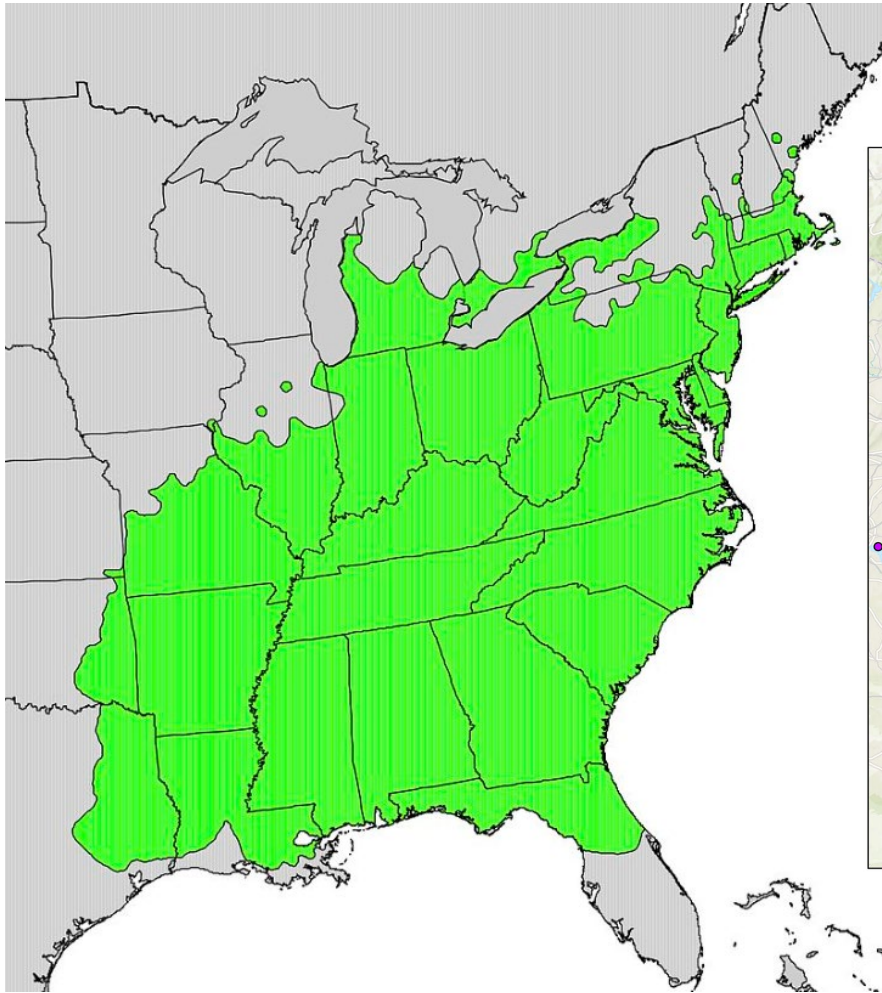
Margery Daughtrey, Plant Pathologist

Cornell University Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center



Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative Conference
November 20, 2025

Lauraceae on Long Island



Range map of Sassafras, Atlas of United States Trees, USGS



Northport, LI, NY

Call to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk Co.
From a concerned citizen – June 2025

Mina Vescera – CCE Suffolk Nursery & Landscape Specialist

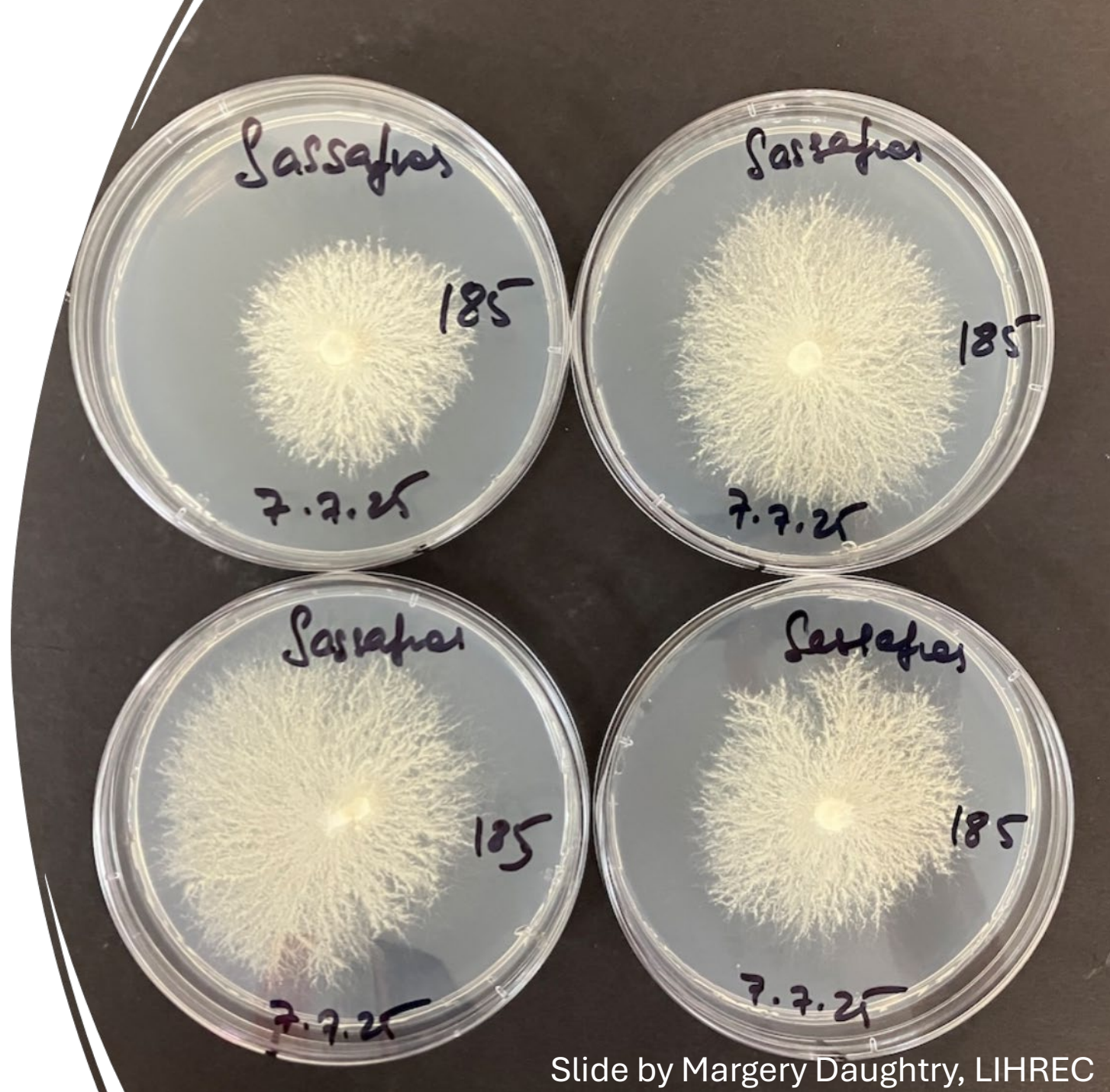


Slide by Margery Daughtry, LIHREC



Blackish streaks
Xylem discoloration

Culture on
Potato-dextrose
Agar (PDA)



Possibilities Considered

- Verticillium wilt?
- New *Ophiostoma* species reported by Olivia M. Bigham (grad student, Forestry & Natural Resources, Purdue University?)
sassafras.wilt@gmail.com



Bottlebrush Buckeye – Verticillium wilt

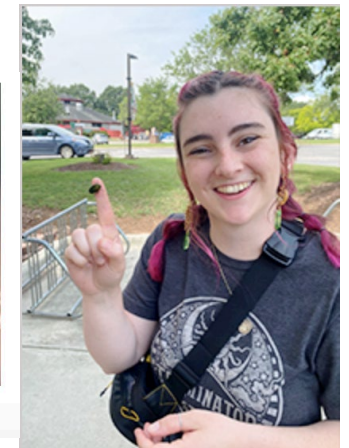
Or Laurel wilt??????????????



2022 isolate



Conidiophore on wood



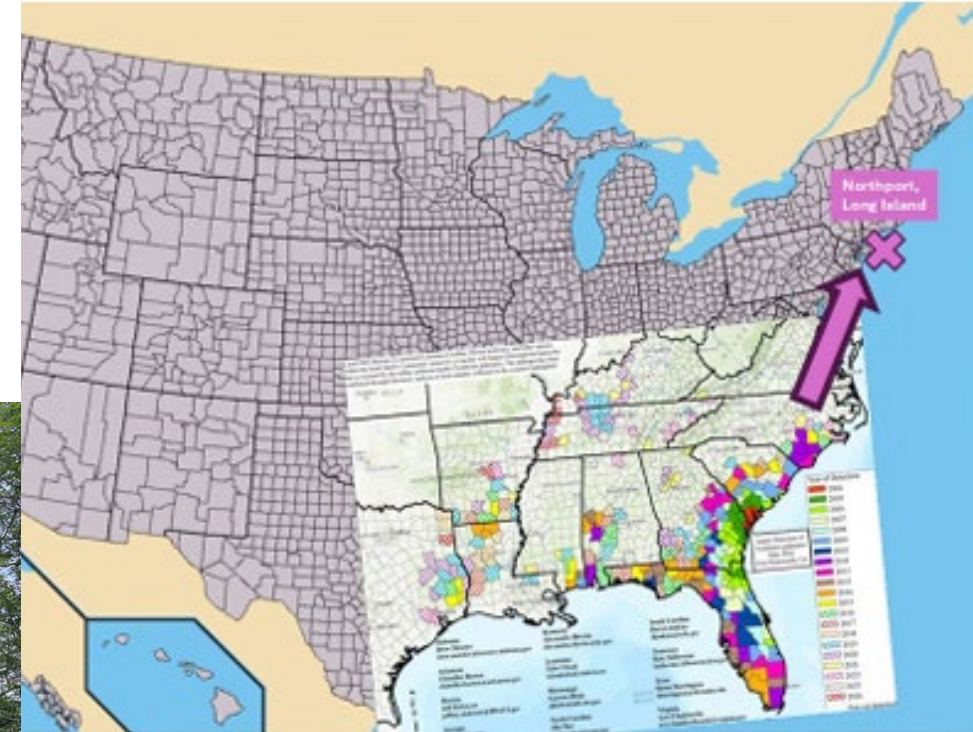
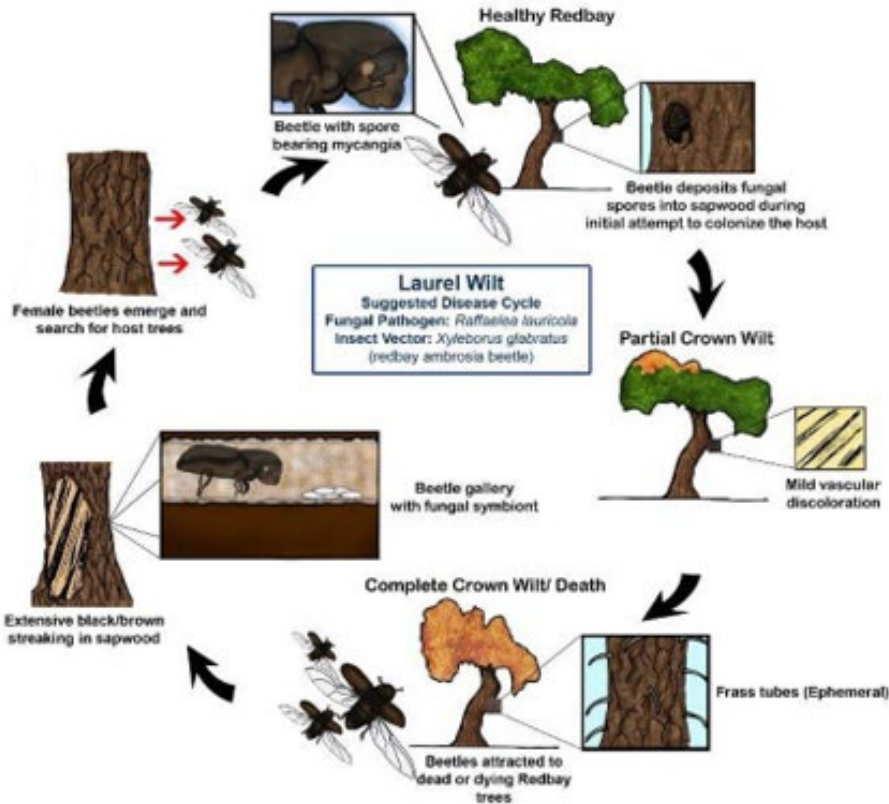
Sassafras wilt (Indiana) - *Ophiostoma* sp,

Slide by Margery Daughtry, LIHREC

What is Laurel Wilt?



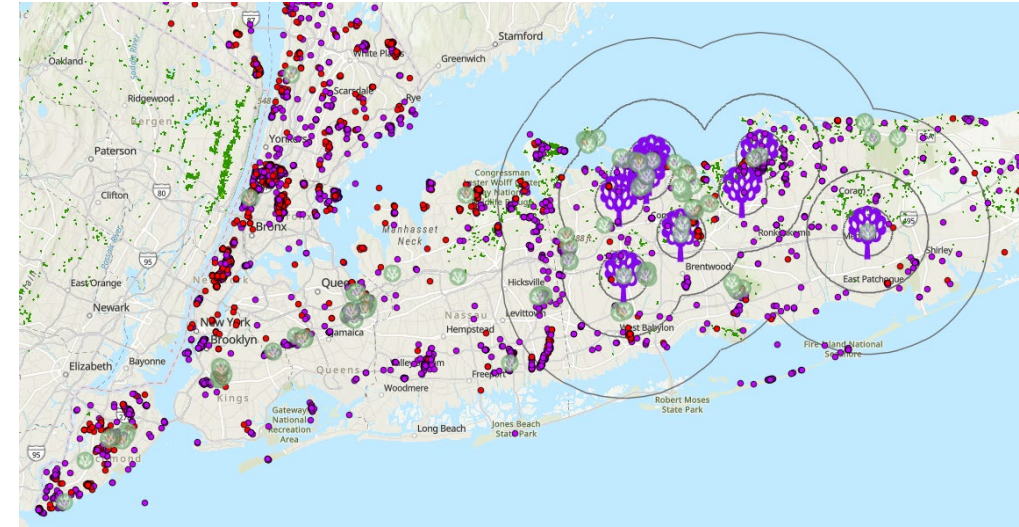
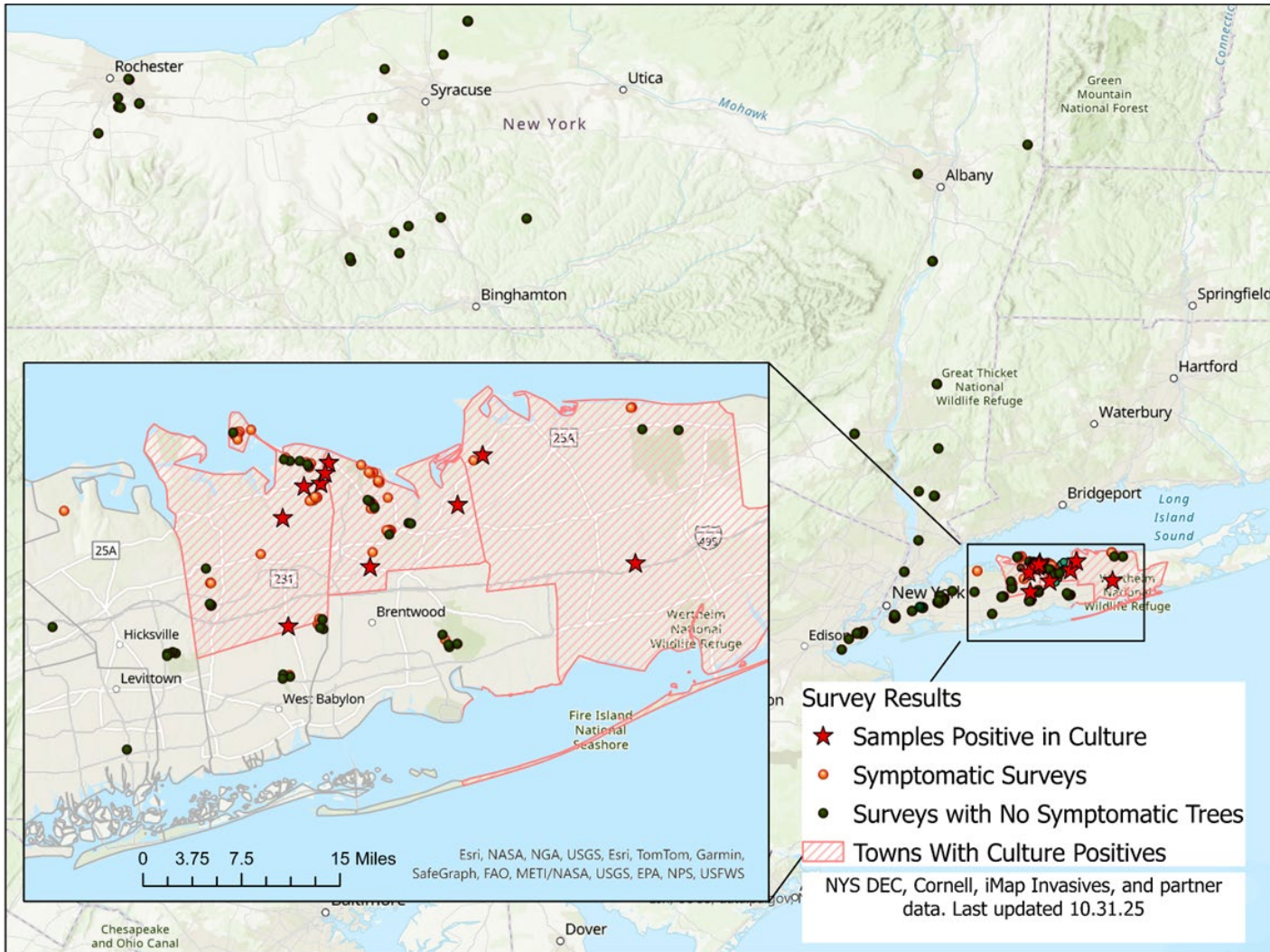
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Last Revised 10/2014

Survey and Delineation



DEC Forest Health Reporting

This form is for reporting invasive species or requesting diagnostic information for tree-related issues to the NYS DEC's Forest Health Diagnostic Lab. Please provide the information below to help us respond to your inquiry. The more complete and accurate information that you can provide, the more easily we will be able to assist you, so please be as detailed as possible. Our staff will review your information and email you with follow up questions or a diagnosis.

If you have trouble with this form or are unable to complete it, you can also email us at foresthealth@dec.ny.gov or call us at 518-478-7813. Thank you for contacting us!

Your Name*

Your email (preferred) or phone number*

How can we contact you to provide information? We usually include links to relevant websites, which are easiest to send via email. We will not contact you outside of providing information about your diagnostic request.

Town Location of Observation*

Town where insect/disease/affected trees are located. If additional location information is needed, we will contact you.



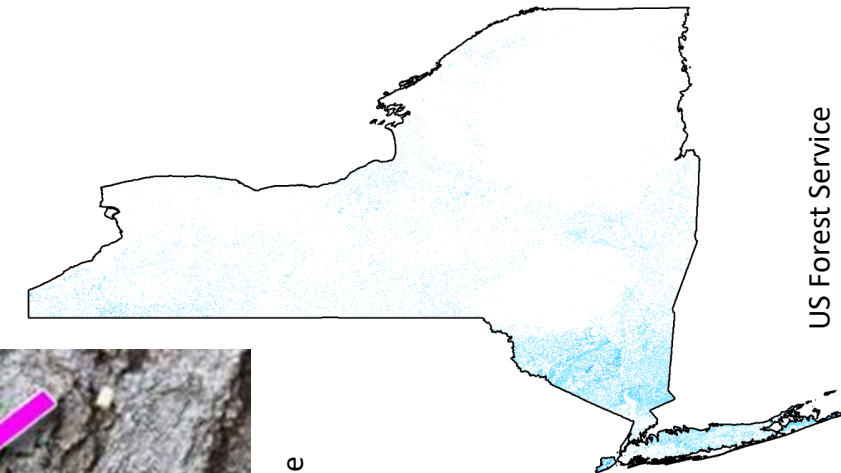
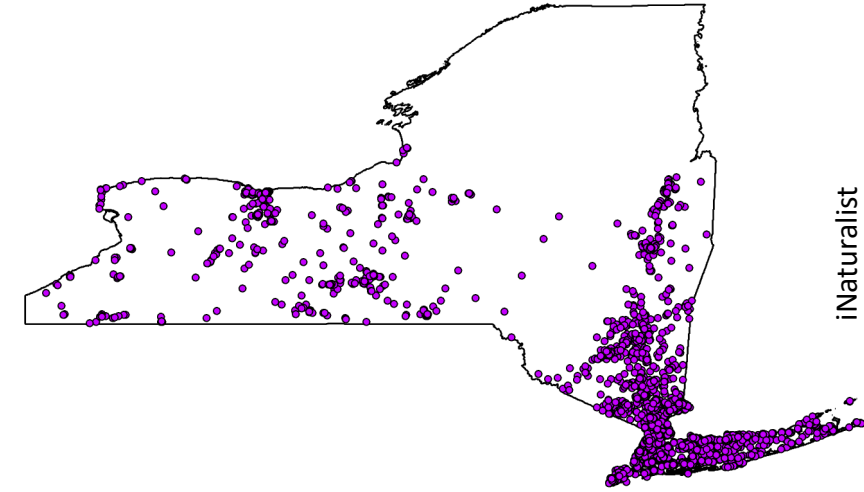
Final Stats

- 2415 sassafras, 880 spicebush surveyed= 3295 total host plants
- 2575 asymptomatic survey plants (78%)
- 636 wilting+106 dead plants in core area=742 (likely a slight overestimate due to other DCAs, double counting)
- 50 public/partner reports
- 23 samples from 15 sites submitted by DEC
- Only sassafras positives at this time



Tips for Survey

- Symptoms likely start in June/July
- Using iNaturalist is good for a starting point- especially for spicebush which may not be included in inventories
- Reach out to tree care companies, especially in urban areas
- Sawdust noodles are ephemeral
- Beetle trapping is not necessarily good for early detection



N.C. Forest Service



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Tips for Sampling

- Smaller branches have thinner bark and are easier to access streaking
- Use a chisel or Ontario knife to access vascular tissue on larger tree trunks
- Check multiple places/branches for streaking- streaking is often needed for a good culture sample
- Culture and PCR results may not always agree

Photo by Margery Daughtrey



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Other Issues

- Hypoxylon canker
- Spicebush swallowtail
- Drought/Xylosandrus sp.
- Anthracnose
- Bot canker
- Armillaria
- Thrips



Thank You

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518-478-7813

Laurel Wilt Resources:

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/forest-health/laurel-wilt>

<https://plantclinic.cornell.edu/be-on-the-look-out-bolo/laurel-wilt/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z17eCDM_nR8



NYC Parks



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation



iMap Invasives



INVASIVE SPECIES
MANAGEMENT
LONG ISLAND



NEW YORK STATE
Agriculture
and Markets



Cornell CALS
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