



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa's 2023

Forest Health Highlights



December 2023

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Iowa's Forest Health Highlights

Introduction

Each year the Iowa DNR Forestry cooperates with numerous agencies to protect Iowa's forests from insects, diseases, and other damaging agents. These programs involve ground and aerial surveys, setting up pheromone traps, following transects for sampling, collecting samples for laboratory analysis, and directing treatments for specific problems during the growing season. After each growing season, the Forestry Section issues a summary report regarding the health of Iowa's forests

This year's report begins with a brief summary of weather events, Iowa's land characteristics, and several survey summaries for insects, diseases, and invasive plants that have the potential to impact the health of Iowa's forests. The 2023 Forest Health Highlights will focus first on the Forest Service's Major Forest Pest List (Page 5) and then cover the additional damaging agents that DNR surveyed.

Weather Review

This winter brought about colder temperatures and below average levels of precipitation. There were several days in January that went above freezing, which caused many conifers to break winter dormancy. The repeated breaks in winter dormancy allowed for winter desiccation and eventual tree death in many conifer species throughout the state. Ongoing statewide severe drought conditions and extreme wind events in the west also contributed to conifer decline.

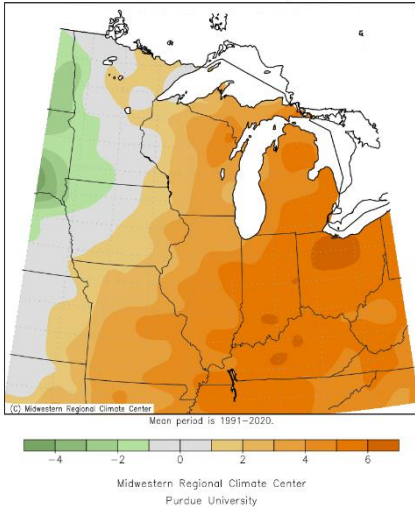
The entire state experienced cooler than average spring temperatures with most all of Iowa receiving fewer rainfall events. Anthracnose (a fungal leaf disease) on sycamore and many other benign fungal leaf diseases were common throughout the state despite the drier conditions. Tubakia and other leaf spot fungi were reported on oaks throughout the summer months and the number of reports increased slightly over last season.

Most of the state experienced normal summer temperatures statewide. However, severe drought conditions were present statewide. There was an increase in oak wilt and bur oak blight reports in 2023. In addition, defoliating caterpillars (cankerworm, Eastern tent, spanworm, and fall webworm) populations were on the rise. The oak wilt sites are being monitored with numerous management plans being implemented, and the bur oak blight locations were referred to Arborists. The defoliating caterpillars were mapped out and the population levels will be monitored in 2024. No management is necessary for the defoliating caterpillars at this time.

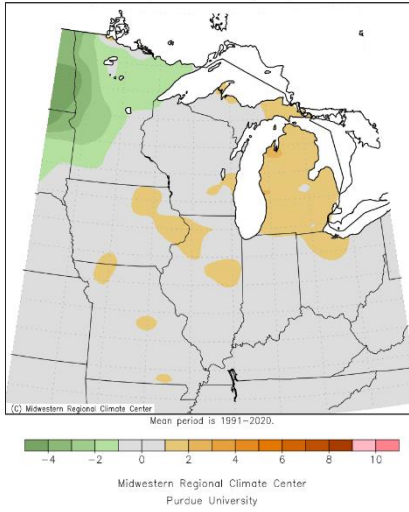
DNR and partners have added 4 new counties of positive cases for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in 2023. There are 97 of the 99 counties that have EAB confirmed. Several phone calls and emails were received about the increased level of ash mortality. Although there are many replanting efforts currently in place to offset this loss, there are no current funding streams to help defer the cost of removal.

Efforts have also been made to survey and identify over 10,208 acres of damage of rapid white oak mortality (RWOM). DNR has seen increased cases of RWOM within the southeastern part of Iowa. This complex is believed to be linked to a number of factors including: Armillaria root disease, two-lined chestnut borer, oak wilt, and other climate related issues. DNR continues to monitor the RWOM locations. New survey methods are being implemented for the 2024 season to help pinpoint the cause and is expected to be reported in the 2024 Forest Health Highlights.

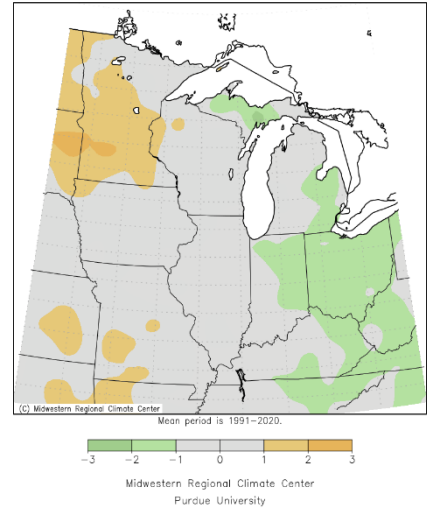
Average Temperature (°F): Departure from Mean
December 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023



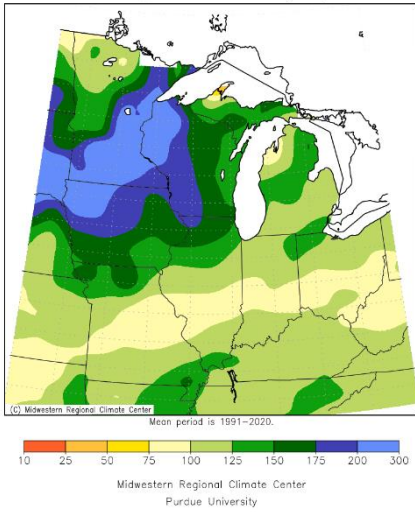
Average Temperature (°F): Departure from Mean
March 1, 2023 to May 31, 2023



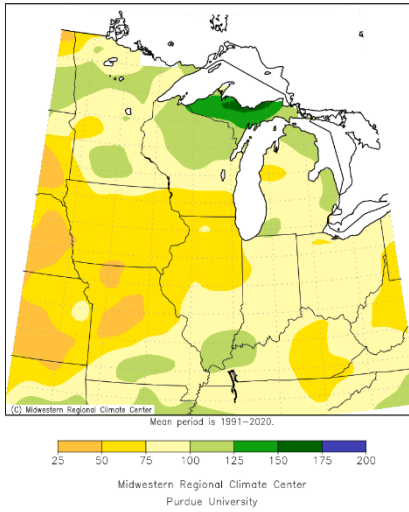
Average Temperature (°F): Departure from Mean
June 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023



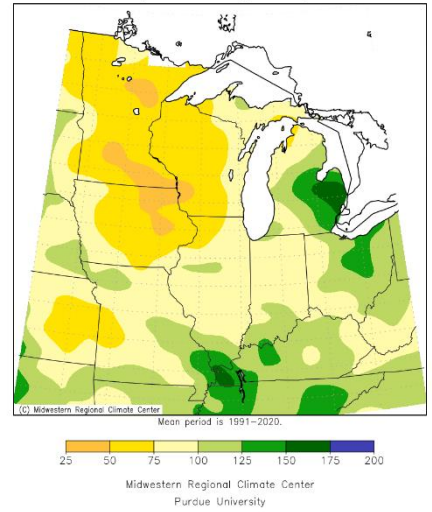
Accumulated Precipitation: Percent of Mean
December 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023



Accumulated Precipitation: Percent of Mean
March 1, 2023 to May 31, 2023



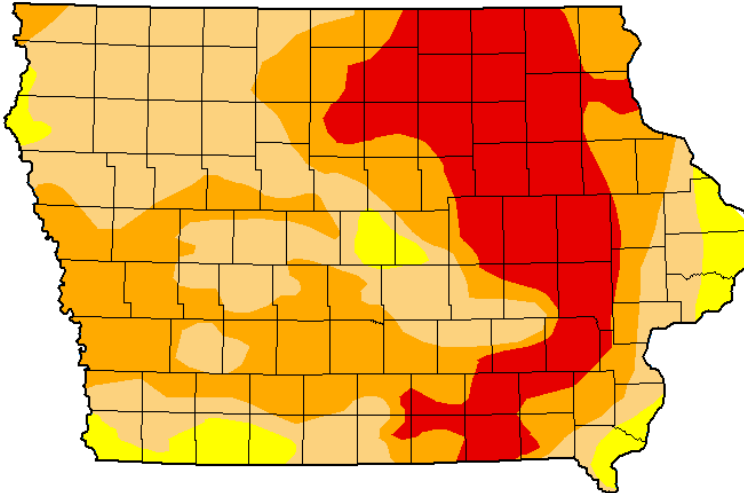
Accumulated Precipitation: Percent of Mean
June 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023



[Images provided by Midwest Climate Watch](#)

U.S. Drought Monitor
Iowa

October 17, 2023
(Released Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

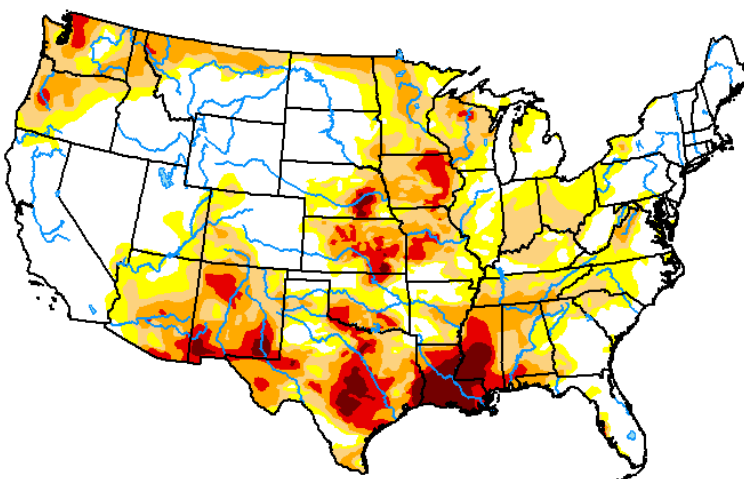
Rocky Bilotta
NCEI/NOAA



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

U.S. Drought Monitor
Contiguous U.S. (CONUS)

October 17, 2023
(Released Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
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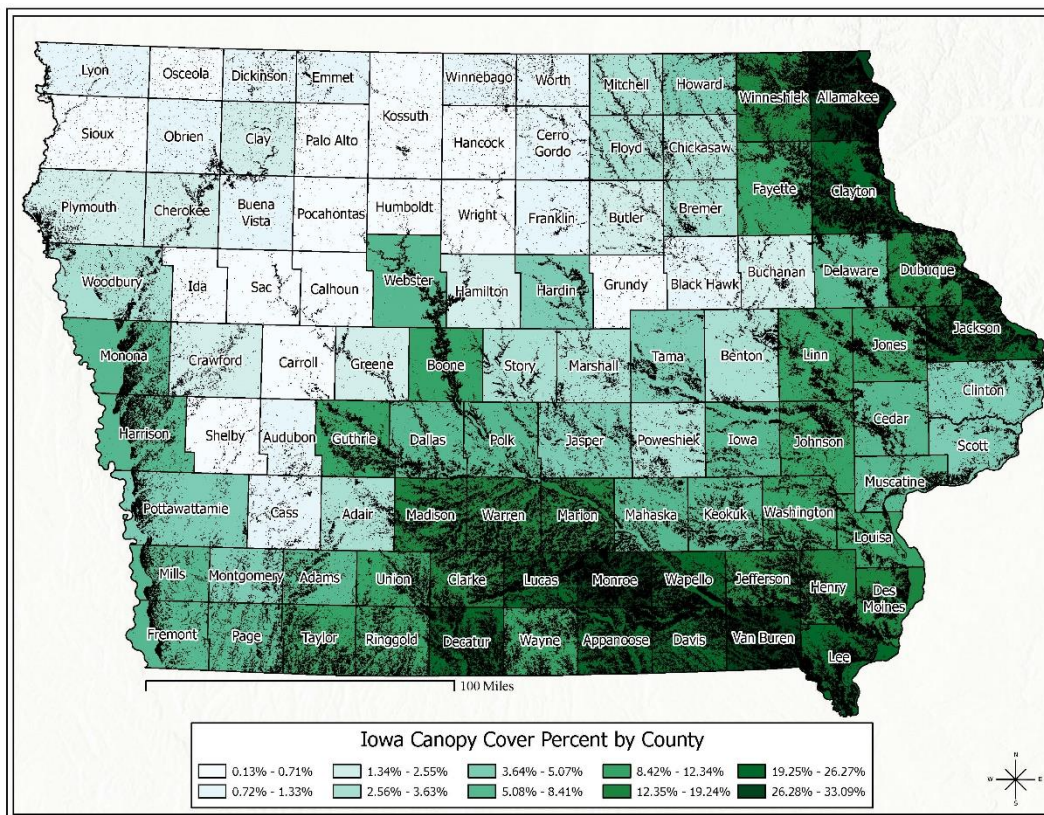
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Land Characteristics

Iowa has approximately 2.85 million acres of forested land representing a decrease from 3.1 million acres in 2012. Most of Iowa's forests are native hardwood with oak, hickory, maple, basswood, walnut, ash, elm, cottonwood, and many other hardwood species. Less than 3% of Iowa's forests are conifer forests. There are currently 1.06 million acres of oak forest in Iowa.

Nearly 95% of the Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) plots found one or more invasive plants competing with natives. The data also showed that over half of trees in Iowa are the preferred tree species by the nonnative pest spongy moth. In addition, the FIA report found that the average annual tree growth has declined while the average annual tree mortality has increased. Much of Iowa's small forests and trees that were along fencerows were cleared to allow for more profitable row cropping. The FIA data also indicated that succession to shade tolerant hardwoods (maples/ironwood) replacing shade intolerant hardwoods (oak/hickory) is continuing. These are alarming forest health trends. (Miles, P.D. Wed Mar 25 20:46:53 MDT 2016. Forest Inventory EVALIDator web-application version 1.6.0.01. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station.)

Currently, there are 186 businesses in Iowa which utilize the wood grown in Iowa's forests. The forest products industry contributes over \$3.9 billion each year to Iowa's economy, including over 18,000 jobs for Iowans (Analysis by E.M. (Ted) Bilek, Economist, USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, WI). Additional details can be found on page 192 of [Iowa's Forest's Today](#).



United States Forest Service Major Pests List

This is a national list. Pests highlighted in red(*) do not pertain to Northeastern Area and do not need to be reported. The items in blue have no known impact in Iowa at this time.

Non-Native Pests

Asian Longhorned Beetle
Balsam Woolly Adelgid
Beech Bark Disease
Browntail Moth
Butternut Canker
Dogwood Anthracnose
Emerald Ash Borer
Goldspotted Oak Borer*
Spongy Moth
Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
Laurel Wilt
Oak Wilt
Sirex Woodwasp
Sudden Oak Death
Thousand Cankers Disease
White Pine Blister Rust
Winter Moth

Native Pests

Armillaria Root Disease
Aspen Leafminer
Bur Oak Blight
Douglas-Fir Beetle*
Douglas-fir Black Stain Root Disease*
Fir Engraver*
Forest Tent Caterpillar
Fusiform Rust
Heterobasidion Root Disease
Jack Pine Budworm
Jeffrey Pine Beetle*
Large Aspen Tortrix
Mountain Pine Beetle*
Northern Spruce Engraver
Pine Black Stain Root Disease
Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer*
Port-Orford-Cedar Root Disease*
Southern Pine Beetle
Spruce Beetle
Spruce Budworm
Subalpine Fir Mortality*
Western Five-Needle Pine Mortality*
Western Pine Beetle*
Western Spruce Budworm*
Yellow-Cedar Decline*

**United States Forest Service Major Pests List:
Armillaria Root Disease**

Year: 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Armillaria Root Disease

Scientific Name: *Armillaria spp.*

Hosts: Hardwoods and Conifers

Setting: N/A

Counties: N/A

Survey Methods: Ground

Acres Affected: N/A

Narrative: Armillaria root disease is fairly common in Iowa. The crown symptoms consist of branch dieback and crown thinning. The fungus produces a mycelial fan in recently killed trees just underneath the inner bark that often have a strong “mushroom” odor. The most common signs are the rhizomorphs that are produced just under the bark, and sometimes just on the bark surface. The rhizomorphs look like “shoestring”, which is why this fungus is sometimes called the shoestring fungi.

If a landowner needs assistance with armillaria root disease, please contact Tivon Feeley (DNR Forest Health Program Leader) at 515-275-8453 or the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581. More information can be found on the [USDA website](#).



Figure 1. Armillaria rhizomorphs under the bark. (Image: Robert L. Anderson, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org).

**United States Forest Service Major Pests List:
Asian Long-Horned Beetle**

Year: 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Asian long-horned beetle

Scientific Name: *Anoplophora glabripennis*

Hosts: Maple, horsechestnut/buckeye, willow, elm, birch, and sycamore

Setting: Urban

Counties: Audubon, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Clayton, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Des Moines, Franklin, Fremont, Hamilton, Hancock, Henry, Humboldt, Jasper, Linn, Madison, Marshall, Mitchell, Plymouth, Sac, Scott, Sioux, Tama, and Woodbury

Survey Methods: Ground

Acres Affected: N/A

Narrative: State legislative funds allowed DNR to conduct 26 community inventories looking for invasive pests including Asian long horned beetle. Maples that had advanced dieback, dime-sized exit holes, or no obvious reason for the decline (e.g., girdling roots, construction damage, or planting depth) were destructively examined for Asian long horned beetle. All of the maples surveyed were healthy and did not have any evidence of Asian long horned beetle. A total of 7,582 maple were part of this survey effort.

Asian long-horned beetle has not been identified in Iowa. It is expected that survey work will resume in 2024. DNR asks all citizens to assist in the future monitoring efforts of this pest.

If beetles are found (Figure 1.) contact Rhonda Santos (USDA Public Information Officer) at 508-852-8044 and Robin Pruisner (State Entomologist) at 515-725-1465. [Asian long-horned beetle](#) information can be found on the USDA website.



Figure 2. Adult Asian long-horned Beetle (Image: Dennis Haugen, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List:

Bur Oak Blight

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Bur Oak Blight

Scientific Name: *Tubakia iowensis*

Hosts: Bur oak and Swamp White Oak

Setting: Rural Forests, Nursery, and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Aerial, Ground, General Observation, and Culturing

Acres Affected: Approximately 1,317 acres

Narrative: Bur oak blight has been recognized in Iowa since the 1990's. However, it is suspected that the fungus that causes the disease has probably been here much longer. Theories on why bur oak blight has increased include: a shift in climate temperatures, more frequent rain events, older mature trees might be more susceptible, and that trees are more susceptible on sites that have a history of grazing or construction.

The disease can be found in most counties in Iowa, causing severe decline and mortality. Spring chemical injections, as needed, with propiconazole (Alamo) seem to control bur oak blight. However, some chemical burning (phytotoxic effects of the chemical) does occur. This control method works well in urban settings.

Currently, control measures have not been identified for woodland trees. Severely declining bur oaks have been harvested (salvaged) before they die. The estimated acres affected reflect the approximate acres of woodland salvage cuts. This does not reflect the urban damage, which cannot be quantified at this time.

There have been a few reports confirmed by the ISU NPDPN Clinic of bur oak blight of swamp white oak. These appear to be true swamp white oak and not hybrids. The damage tends to be some venial necrosis and does not appear to be as severe on swamp white oak as it is on bur oak. These positive swamp white oaks will be followed to determine if the disease progresses over the years as it does on bur oaks.

All samples bur oak blight should be sent to the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic, who can be reached at 515-294-0581.

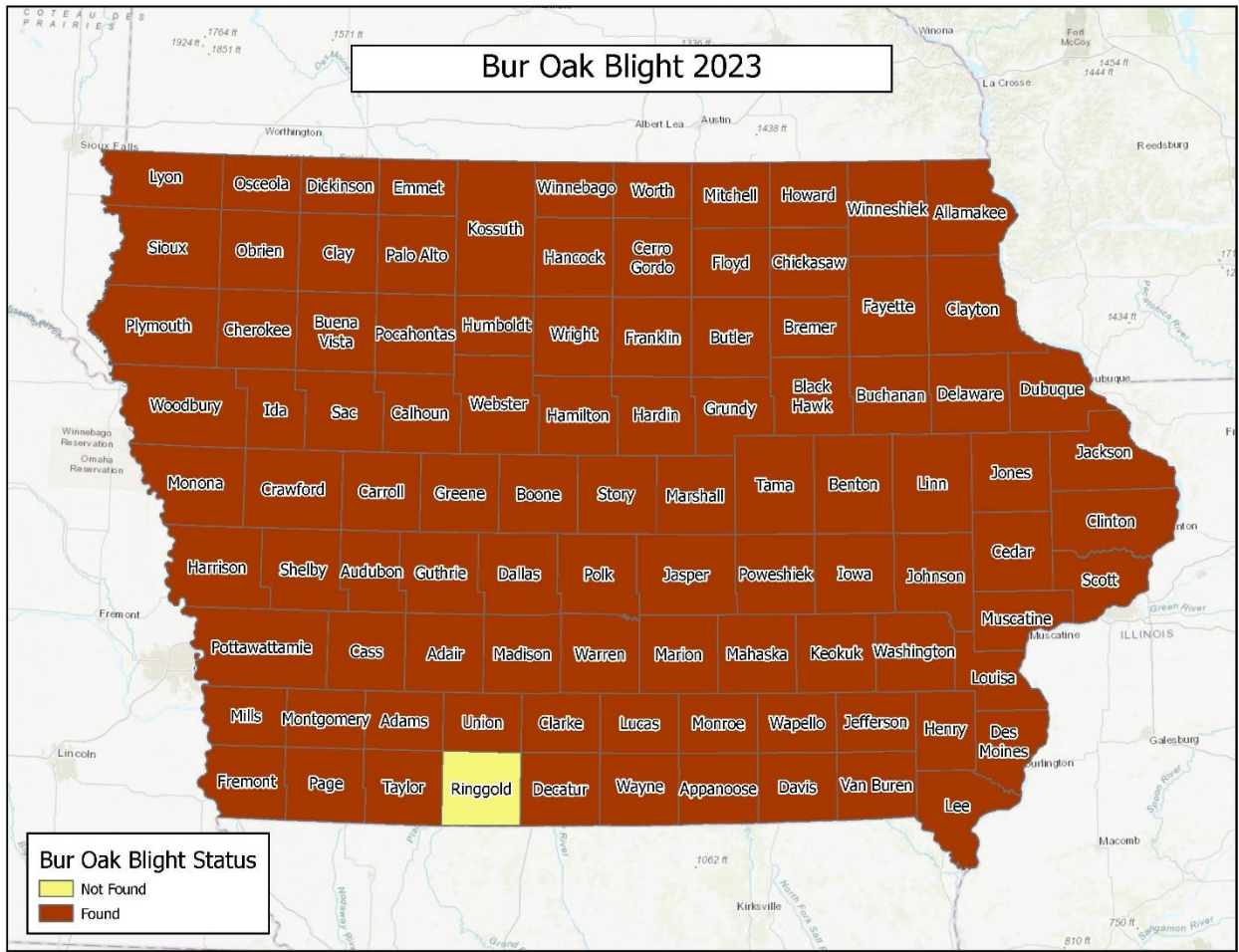


Figure 3. Current map of known locations of bur oak blight. (Image: Created by DNR based on locations provided by Dr. Harrington, ISU).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List:

Butternut Canker

Year: 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Butternut Canker

Scientific Name: *Ophiognomonia clavigignenti-juglandacearum*

Hosts: Butternut

Setting: Rural Forest

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: General Observation

Acres Affected: Eastern half of Iowa (Scattered throughout roughly 2 million acres)

Narrative: Butternut canker is found throughout Iowa, but is largely concentrated in the Eastern half of Iowa where butternuts occur. The disease is fatal to native non hybrid butternuts.

DNR has previously collected seed from 20 native butternut trees and has established an Iowa butternut orchard in the Loess Hills. The 20-butternut trees displayed outstanding growth in Western Iowa (where the canker is rarely found) and no signs of butternut canker were found in 2023.

If a landowner needs assistance with [butternut canker](#), please contact Tivon Feeley (DNR Forest Health Program Leader) at 515-275-8453 or the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.



Figure 4. Examples of canker found on butternut trees (Image: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Archive, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Bugwood.org).

**United States Forest Service Major Pests List:
Emerald Ash Borer**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Emerald Ash Borer

Scientific Name: *Agrilus planipennis*

Hosts: All Ash (*Fraxinus*) species

Setting: Rural Forest, Nursery, Urban

Counties: Adair, Adams, Allamakee, Appanoose, Audubon, Benton, Black Hawk, Boone, Bremer, Buchanan, Buena Vista, Butler, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Cerro Gordo, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Delaware, Des Moines, Dickinson, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Fremont, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Howard, Humboldt, Ida, Iowa, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Kossuth, Lee, Louisa, Lucas, Lyon, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Mills, Mitchell, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, O'Brien, Osceola, Page, Plymouth, Pocahontas, Polk, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Sac, Scott, Shelby, Sioux, Story, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, Winnebago, Winneshiek, Woodbury, Worth and Wright.

Survey Methods: Aerial, Ground, General Observation, and Trapping

Acres Affected: Statewide (Unknown Acres)

Narrative: Emerald ash borer (EAB) was identified and confirmed in Iowa on May 14, 2010 on Henderson Island in Allamakee County. EAB has since been confirmed in 97 counties. Since the insect was already widespread, a statewide quarantine was issued February 4, 2014.

DNR visually inspected ash trees in 4 counties in 2023. The surveys found EAB in Monona, Osceola, Plymouth and Woodbury counties. The other counties were confirmed IDALS through inspections, reports made by arborist, municipal contacts, local citizens and County Conservation Boards.

If a landowner has an ash tree that they believe has emerald ash borer please contact Tivon Feeley (DNR Forest Health Program Leader) at 515-669-1402 or Mike Kintner (IDALS EAB Coordinator) at 515-725-2877. Emerald ash bore information can be found at [Emerald Ash Borer Info](#) and the [Iowa DNR](#).

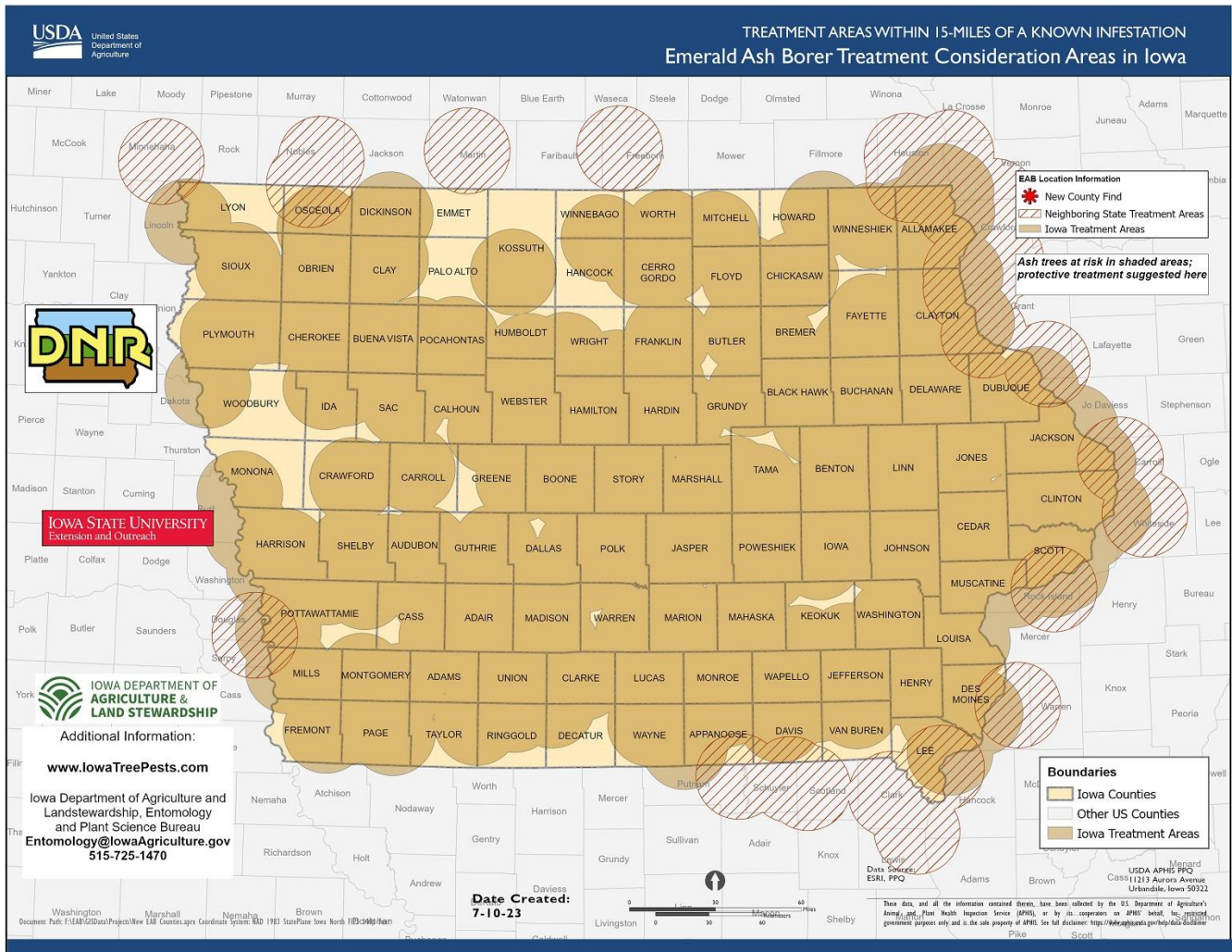


Figure 5. Locations of the emerald ash borer infestations, as of August 2023. Please note that the entire State of Iowa is now quarantined for EAB. The brown circles around each infestation represent a 15 miles radius. The brown circles are done to assist landowners that are considering chemical treatments. The current recommendations from the Iowa EAB Team are not to chemically treat an ash tree until your property is within one of the brown circles. (Image: Tivon Feeley, DNR)

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Eastern Tent Caterpillar

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Eastern Tent Caterpillar

Scientific Name: *Malacosoma americanum*

Hosts: Numerous tree species

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Ground and General Observation

Acres Affected: Approximately 900 acres

Narrative: Iowa DNR started receiving reports of eastern tent caterpillars in Northeast Iowa in late May. Eastern tent caterpillars are native and commonly found throughout the United States. The forest tent caterpillars have regional outbreaks every 6 to 16 years. The population levels of this pest are on the rise, but control methods are not advised at this time.

This is the first year the numbers have started to increase of [Eastern tent caterpillars](#).



Figure 6. The picture above shows eastern tent caterpillar on the main stem of a young tree. (Image: William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International, Bugwood.org).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Forest Tent Caterpillar

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Forest Tent Caterpillar

Scientific Name: *Malacosoma disstria*

Hosts: Aspen and Maples

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek

Survey Methods: Ground and General Observation

Acres Affected: Approximately 312 acres

Narrative: Iowa DNR started receiving reports of forest tent caterpillars in Northeast Iowa in late May. Forest tent caterpillars are native and commonly found throughout the United States. The forest tent caterpillars have regional outbreaks every 6 to 16 years.

This is the eleventh year of reports of this pest. The populations did increase slightly in 2023, but control methods are not needed at this time.

This is the first year the numbers have started to increase of [forest tent caterpillars](#).



Figure 7. The picture above shows forest tent caterpillars on the main stem of a young tree. (Image: Robert Honeywell, DNR).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List:

Lymantria dispar

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Spongy Moth

Scientific Name: *Lymantria dispar*

Hosts: Oak, spruce, maples, elms, and many more

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Pheromone Delta Traps

Acres Affected: None

Narrative: Spongy moth has repeatedly been captured in Iowa, but the population level has effectively been controlled through trapping and mating disruption. Feeding damage has not occurred to Iowa's trees.

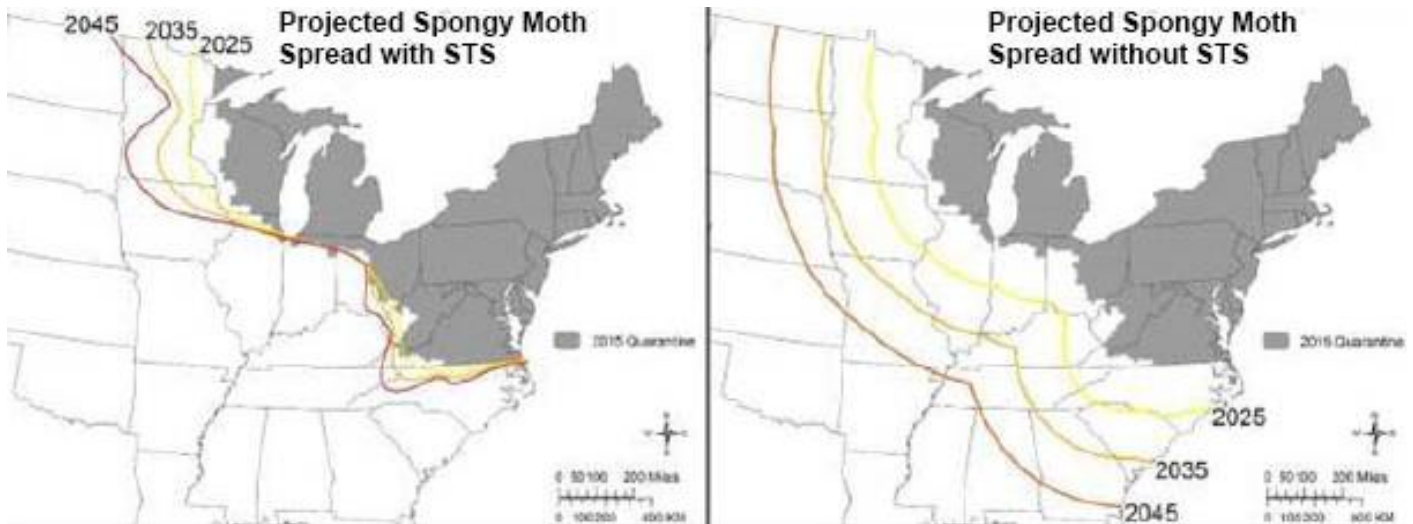
During the 2023 trapping season, 10,491 male moths were captured. 28 areas will be 'delimit' trapped in 2024 to determine whether Iowa has an isolated early infestation, which adds an additional 289 traps. There are no treatment blocks identified for 2023

No egg masses were found during the fall survey. All maps will be final after genetic testing on the captured male moths is completed and shows that they are all spongy moth.

More information on the spongy moth and the spray program can be found on the [Iowa Tree Pest](#) website.



The Spongy Moth Slow the Spread (STS) Foundation establishes a formal framework for cooperation among the ten states (listed at the bottom of page) who work with each other and the USDA Forest Service to slow the spread of spongy moth, *Lymantria dispar* (L.). Together they have achieved their goal of reducing spread of this destructive pest by more than 60%, which has prevented infestation of more than 140 million acres in the past 15 years and will continue to limit future spread into new areas as displayed in the map below.



The Threat: Spongy moth is a destructive, exotic forest pest that feeds on over 300 species of trees. It was accidentally introduced into the United States in 1869 and is currently established throughout the northeast and parts of the upper mid-west (gray shaded area on maps), where it has defoliated 80 million acres since 1970.

- It feeds on over 300 species of trees but oaks are most preferred.
- Defoliation causes extensive tree mortality, reduces property values, adversely affects commerce and causes allergic reactions in sensitive individuals that come in contact with the caterpillars.
- Most of the susceptible hardwood forests in the United States are not yet infested and are still at risk.

The Benefits of STS:

- Prevents invasion of more than 300 million acres over the next 30 years (compare maps).
- Protects the extensive urban and wild land hardwood forests in the south and upper mid-west while also protecting the environment through use of spongy moth specific strategies.
- Yields a benefit to cost ratio of 3 to 1 by delaying the onset of impacts that occur as spongy moth invades new areas.
- Delays the impacts associated with spongy moth quarantines on intra- and inter-state commerce.
- Unifies the partners and promotes a coordinated, region-wide action based on biological need.



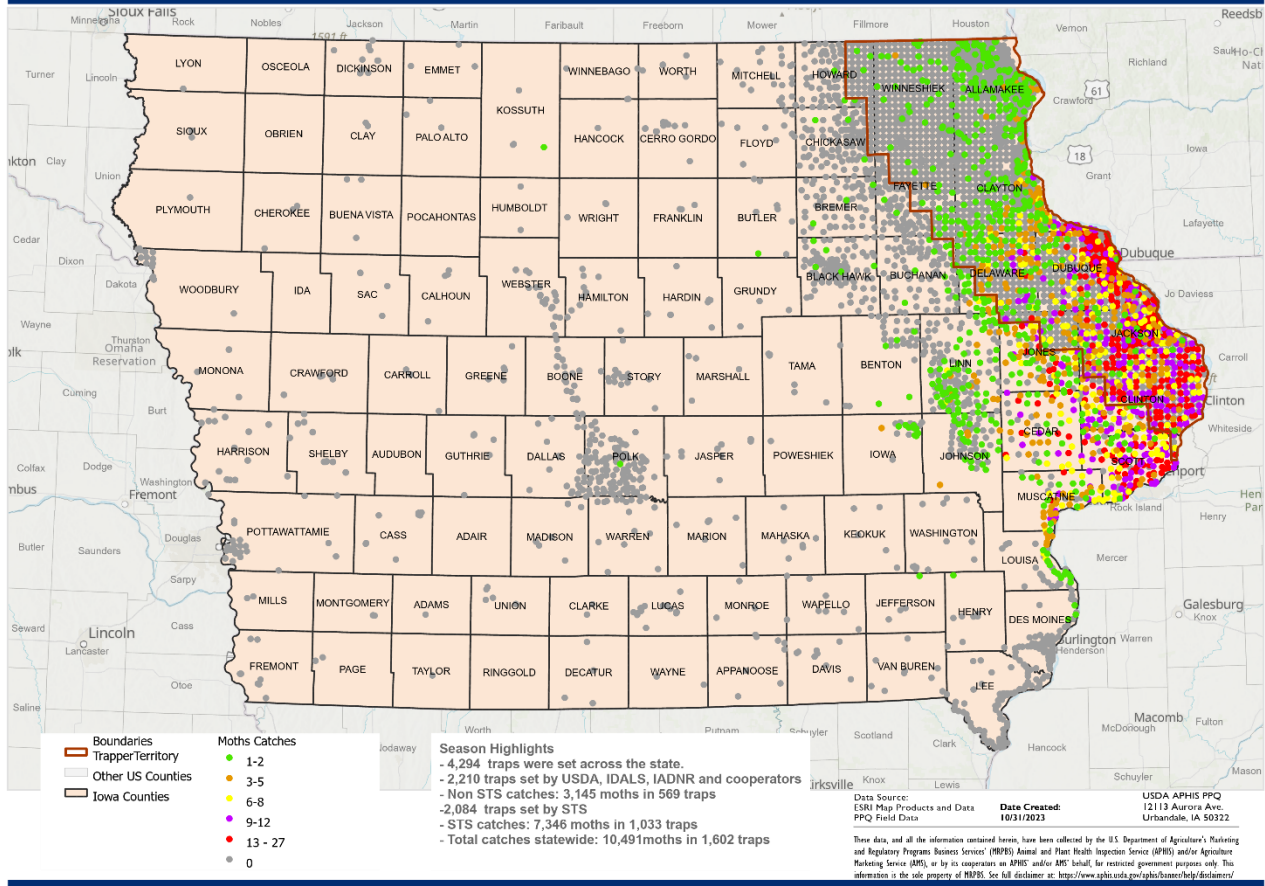


Figure 8. The map above details the locations of all the spongy moth traps and the number of moths captured in them during the 2023-trapping season. The total male moth capture was 10,491 male moths. (Image: Mark Hollister, PPQ).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Heterobasidion Root Disease

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Heterobasidion root disease

Scientific Name: *Heterobasidion spp.*

Hosts: Conifers (All)

Setting: N/A

Counties: Lucas and Van Buren

Survey Methods: Visual

Acres Affected: N/A

Narrative: Heterobasidion root disease has been identified in Iowa and is a pest that can occur throughout Iowa on pines or red cedar. Historically it has been reported on jack pine in Stephens State Forest, and white pine in Shimek State Forest. Survey work was conducted at Yellow River State Forest for Heterobasidion root disease. Heterobasidion root disease has not yet been identified at Yellow River State Forest. If a landowner suspects Heterobasidion root disease, please contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581. See the [USDA website](#) for more information.



Figure 9. Example of heterobasidion root disease. (Image: William Jacobi, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org)

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Oak Wilt

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Oak Wilt

Scientific Name: *Ceratocystis fagacearum*

Hosts: All Oak Species

Setting: Woodlands and Urban

Counties: Nearly statewide, no new counties added in 2023

Survey Methods: Aerial, Ground, culturing, and general observation.

Acres Affected: 205 acres

Narrative: DNR did not take any oak wilt samples this year. The DNR laboratory was set up only for insect identification for the 2023 season.

If a landowner feels that they have discovered [oak wilt](#), please contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.



Figure 10. The map above details the counties in Iowa with confirmed oak wilt. Oak wilt may occur in the non-shaded counties, but has not been confirmed by the ISU Diagnostic Clinic. (Image: Quinn Chavez, USFS).

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Sudden Oak Death

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Sudden Oak Death

Scientific Name: *Phytophthora ramorum*

Hosts: All Oaks

Setting: Rural Forests, Nursery, and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: N/A

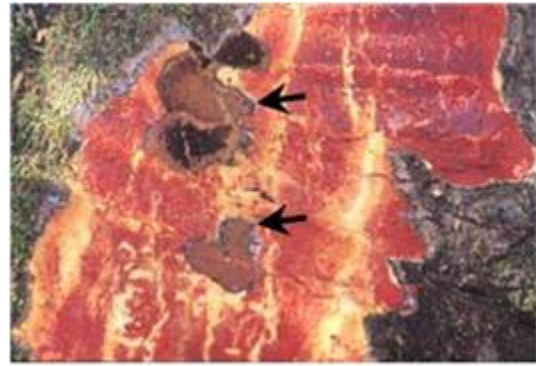
Acres Affected: N/A

Narrative: Iowa did receive numerous notices of “trace forward” of suspected sudden oak death in 2023, meaning that potentially infected plant material had been shipped to Iowa. The notices were received too late in the season and the plants had been sold. Iowa’s weather conditions make it extremely unlikely for sudden oak death to survive. Stream baiting, to test for sudden oak death was not conducted in 2023 and is not planned for 2024 at this time.

If a landowner suspects that their plants have [sudden oak death](#), please contact Tivon Feeley (DNR Forest Health Program Leader) at 515-725-8453 or Robin Pruisner (State Entomologist) at 515-725-1465.



Ooze bleeds from a canker on an infected oak.



Black zone lines are found under diseased bark in oak.

Figure 11. Two examples of the oozing canker found on an infected tree. The black lines under the bark are also symptomatic of sudden oak death. (Images: Joseph O’Brien, USDA Forest Service Pest Alert, and Bugwood.org)

United States Forest Service Major Pests List: Thousand Cankers Disease

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Thousand Cankers Disease

Scientific Name: *Pityophthorus juglandis* and *Geosmithia morbida*

Hosts: Walnut

Setting: Rural Forests, Nursery, and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Ground, General Observation, and Culturing

Acres Affected: None

Narrative A total of 631 walnut trees were selected for the 2023 walnut twig beetle survey. A Lindgren four funnel dry trap with the walnut twig beetle pheromone developed by ISCAA Technologies was placed in a declining walnut tree for each location in the survey.

The traps were left on the trees for three weeks before being moved to another tree during the months of April, May, and the first week in June.

The following beetles were collected during the survey: *Xyleborus atratus*, *Ambrosiodmus tachygraphus*, *Hylocurus rudis*, *Xylosandrus germanus*, *Xyleborinus saxeseni*, *Xyloterinus politus*, *Xylosandrus crassiusculus*, *Pityophthorus lautus* (and subspecies), *Pityophthorus crinalis*, and *Pityophthorus consimilis*. There was a total of 16,181 ambrosia beetles, Pityophthorus beetles, and weevils that were collected. **No walnut twig beetles were found during the survey.** There were numerous other beetles, not of concern, collected (i.e. Japanese beetle, June bugs, etc.) but not counted as part of the survey.

The highest beetle captures occurred during the months of May and June. Historically, the captures decreased after those months. These trends have been consistent over the last several years, indicating that the best time to capture *Pityophthorus* species in Iowa is May and the first week in June.

If a landowner has walnut trees that they believe have [thousand cankers disease](#), please contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.



Figure 12. One of the Lindgren funnel traps that were used in conjunction with the walnut twig beetle pheromone. The traps were placed at sawmills, communities, and campgrounds. (Image: Shane Donegan, DNR)



Figure 13. A look inside the Lindgren Funnel trap capture chamber. The picture shows two pheromone pouches and a 3 inch long strip of dog collar that was used to kill the beetles that entered the capture chamber. (Image: Shane Donegan, DNR)

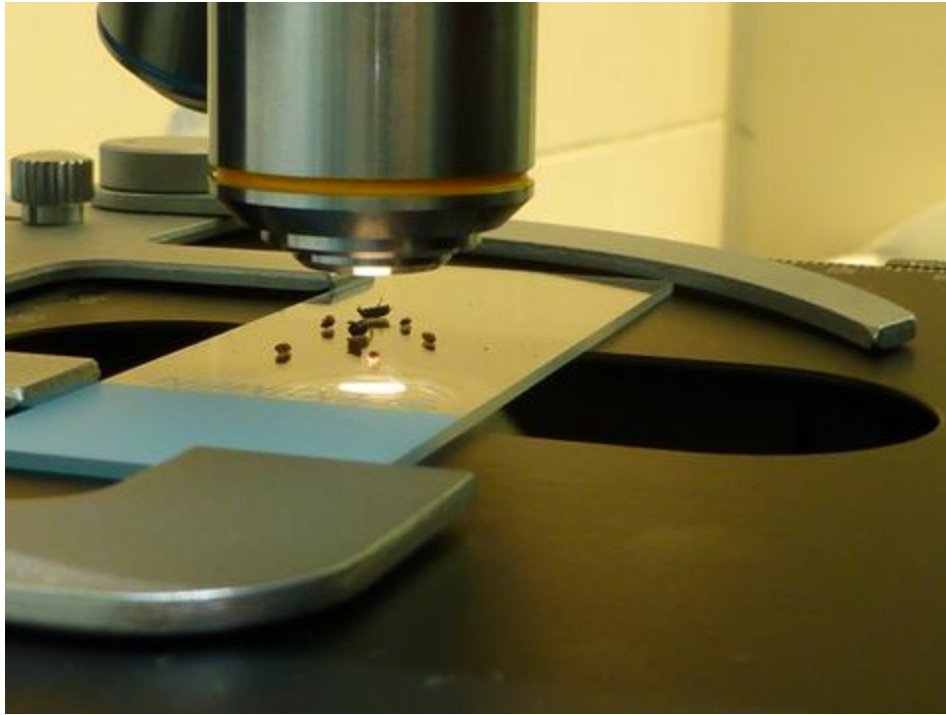


Figure 14. Microscopes were used to help identify the beetle captured. The walnut twig beetle is about 1/4 of an inch long.
(Image: Shane Donegan, DNR)



Figure 15. Pictured above is a *Pityophthorus* sp. (not *P. juglandis*) that was captured and sent in for identification. (Image: Shane Donegan, DNR)

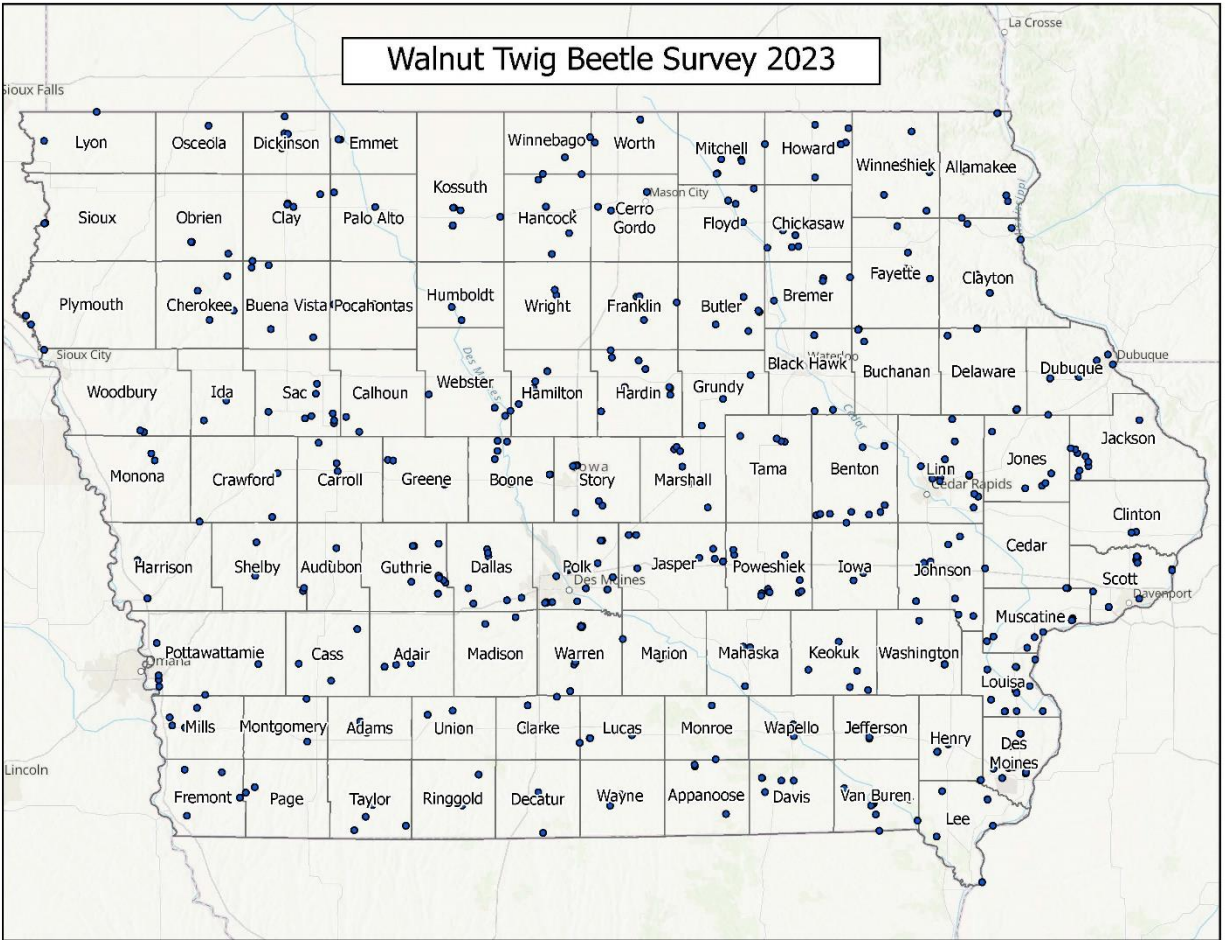


Figure 16. The locations of the 631 survey traps for walnut twig beetle throughout the state. (Image: Tivon Feeley, DNR)

**United States Forest Service Major Pests List:
Blister Rust**

Year: 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: White Pine Blister Rust

Scientific Name: *Cronartium ribicola*

Hosts: White Pine

Setting: N/A

Counties: N/A

Survey Methods: N/A

Acres Affected: Unknown

Narrative: White pine blister rust has been identified in Iowa, and is a pest that can occur throughout the native white pine range in Iowa. No additional funds were available to conduct survey work. No suspect samples were submitted to DNR or the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic. No other survey work was conducted for white pine blister rust. If a landowner suspects [white pine blister rust](#) they should contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.

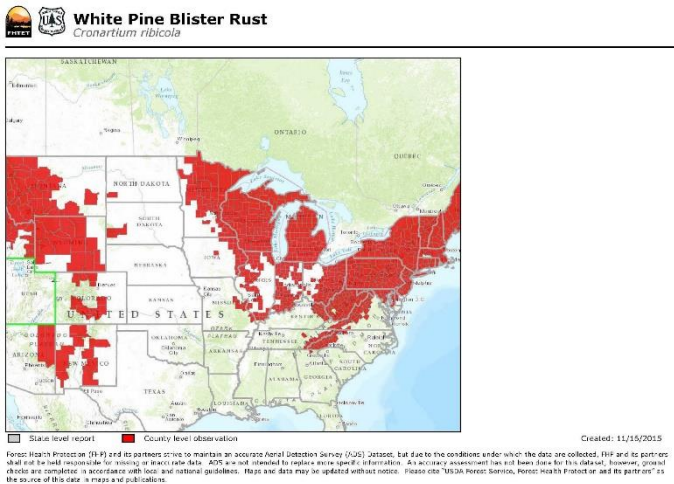


Figure 17. The range map for known areas of white pine blister rust (Map: USFS)



Figure 18. Rust spores on an infected tree. (Image: Brian Geils, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Spotted Lanternfly**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Spotted Lanternfly

Scientific Name: *Lycorma delicatula*

Hosts: Maple, Oak, Pine, Poplar, Sycamore, Walnut, Willow

Setting: Nursery

Counties: Polk

Survey Methods: Ground observation

Acres Affected: Areas unknown

Narrative: Spotted Lanternfly was identified in Dallas county during the 2022 season. Two instars were found by staff at a nursery and later confirmed by IDNR, IDALS, and APHIS without a breeding population. DNR will continue its cooperative effort to help survey for this pest.

For more information about the spotted lanternfly More information on the spotted lanternfly can be found on the [Iowa DNR's Forest Health](https://www.iowadnr.gov/forest-health) website.



Figure 19. Adult Spotted Lanternfly (Image: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org)



Figure 20. Immature (Instar) Spotted Lanternfly (Image: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Cankerworm**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Cankerworm, Loopers, Spanworms

Scientific Name: *N/A*

Hosts: Apple, Ash, Beech, Elm, Hickory, Linden, Maples and Oaks

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Eastern Iowa

Survey Methods: Ground observation

Acres Affected: Areas unknown

Narrative: Iowa DNR started receiving reports of cankerworm in select counties in late May of 2023. Cankerworm caterpillars are native and commonly found throughout the United States. The cankerworm caterpillar rarely causes defoliation that were observed throughout Eastern Iowa counties. Expected that this pest will not be a risk to forest health. This is the fifth year of the cankerworm outbreak and it is expected that populations will be high in 2024. DNR will monitor the populations in 2024.



Figure 21. The picture above shows a Cankerworm on a leaf of a young tree. (Image: James B. Hanson, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org).



Figure 22. The picture above shows a tree that has been damaged by Cankerworm (Image: Tivon Feeley, DNR)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Pine Shoot Beetle**

Year: 2023
State: Iowa
Forest Pest

Common Name: Pine Shoot Beetle
Scientific Name: *Tomicus piniperda*

Hosts: All Pines
Setting: Rural Forests, Nursery, and Urban
Counties: Statewide
Survey Methods: N/A
Acres Affected: Unknown
Narrative:

Pine Shoot Beetle was identified September 18, 2006 and all counties in Iowa were quarantined for pine shoot beetle. Since the entire state is quarantined, no further monitoring has been needed. If a landowner needs assistance with management options for the [pine shoot beetle](#), please contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.

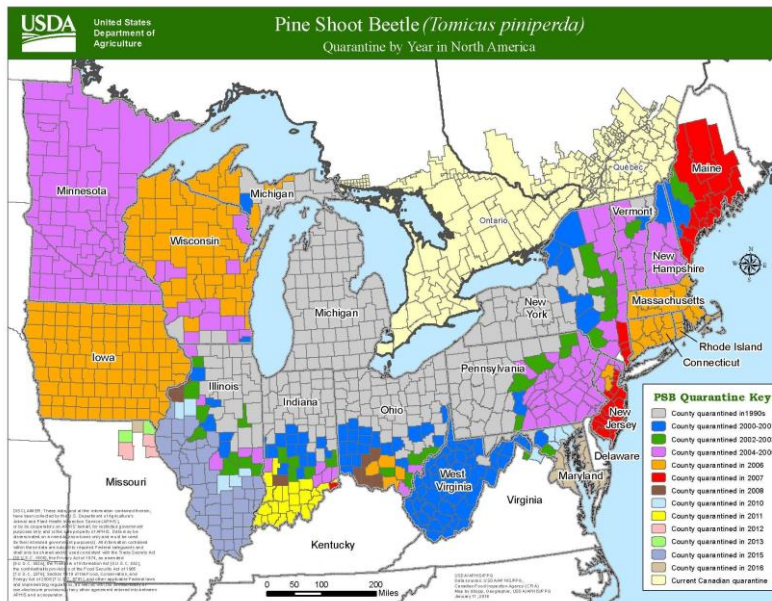


Figure 23. The map above shows the quarantined areas for pine shoot beetle. (Image: by USDA-APHIS-PPQ)

Pine Shoot Beetle Background

The pine shoot beetle (*Tomicus piniperda* L.) is an introduced pest that attacks pines. It was first discovered in the US at a Christmas tree farm near Cleveland, Ohio, in July 1992. A native of Europe, the beetle attacks new shoots of pine trees, stunting the growth of the trees. The pine shoot beetle may also attack stressed pine trees by breeding under the bark at the base of the trees. The beetles can cause severe decline in the health of the trees, and in some cases, kill the trees when high populations of the beetle exist.

In May, 2006, USDA-APHIS-PPQ confirmed the presence of pine shoot beetle (PSB) in Dubuque and Scott counties. A Federal Order was issued effective June 22, 2006 placing Dubuque and Scott counties under a Federal quarantine for interstate movement of PSB regulated articles. Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) was provided a copy of the Federal Order as well as additional information concerning the pine shoot beetle, and was requested to consider placing a state PSB quarantine for intrastate movement of PSB regulated articles from Dubuque and Scott Counties. However, after considerable review, IDALS declined to implement an intra-state quarantine for PSB. Therefore, a Federal Order was issued effective September 18, 2006 for quarantine of the entire state of Iowa for PSB, *Tomicus piniperda*.

The quarantine affects the following pine products, called “regulated articles”:

- Pine nursery stock
- Pine Christmas trees
- Wreaths and garlands
- Pine logs/lumber (with bark attached)

All pine nursery stock shipped from Iowa to a non-regulated state must be inspected and certified free from PSB. This inspection and certification must occur just before shipping. Small pine seedlings (less than 36 inches tall, and 1 inch in diameter) and greenhouse grown pines require a general inspection of the whole shipment. All other (larger) pine nursery stock shipments must have 100% tip-by-tip inspection.



Figure 24. The picture above shows the pine shoot beetle and the damage it causes to branches.
(Images: Steve Passoa, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Phomopsis galls**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Phomopsis galls

Scientific Name: Phomopsis spp.

Hosts: Bitternut and Red Oaks

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Western Iowa

Survey Methods: Ground, General Observation, and Culturing

Acres Affected: Approximately 10,916 aerial surveyed acres

Narrative: Phomopsis Galls may occur singly or in clusters on the trunk and branches. They are woody, rough, more or less round swellings. They can be from very small to 10" in diameter. They appear as tight clusters of nodules, each nodule up to 1" or more in diameter. If cut open they reveal disorganized woody tissue but no insect chambers or tunnels.

Spores are produced throughout the growing season and are spread by wind and rain splashes. It is believed that spores infect a host by entering a wound of a young twig. The fungus then spreads to branches and to the trunk. The galls do not kill the host but reduce vigor and girdle small branches causing dieback. Uninfected trees may occur near heavily infected ones. For more information visit [Wisconsin DNR Forestry News](http://www.wisconsin.gov/dnr/forestry/news)



Figure 25. Picture of an infected hickory tree with Phomopsis galls. (Image: www.minnesotaseasons.com/Fungi/Phomopsis_gall_on_hickory.html)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Dutch Elm Disease**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Dutch Elm Disease

Scientific Name: *Ophiostoma ulmi* or *Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*

Hosts: Elm

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Ground, General Observation, and Culturing

Acres Affected: Approximately 10,916 aerial surveyed acres

Narrative: Dutch elm disease was introduced to North America in the 1930's and began killing millions of native elm trees. Dutch elm disease has been identified in all of Iowa's counties, and it's estimated that just over 95 percent of the urban elm trees have succumbed to this disease.

The fungus is native to Asia and was introduced to Europe shortly after World War I. From Europe, it traveled to North America in the 1930's in crates made from infected elm logs. The disease quickly infected elms across the United States since our native elms did not have natural resistance to the introduced pathogen.

Dutch elm disease was reported statewide in 2023. The 2023 season appeared to have a high occurrence of [Dutch elm disease](#).



**Figure 26. Areas where Dutch elm disease is generally known to occur within the continental United States.
(Image: Tivon Feeley, DNR)**

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Hickory Dieback**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Hickory Dieback

Scientific Name: *Fusarium solani* and *Ceratocystis smalleyi*

Hosts: Bitternut Hickory and Occasionally Shagbark Hickory

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: Ground

Acres Affected: Approximately 10,000 acres

Narrative: Hickories have continued to decline statewide. Mortality has become fairly common within the range of bitternut hickory making it difficult to track and estimate the acres impacted. If a landowner suspects hickory mortality, they should contact the ISU Plant Diagnostic Clinic at 515-294-0581.

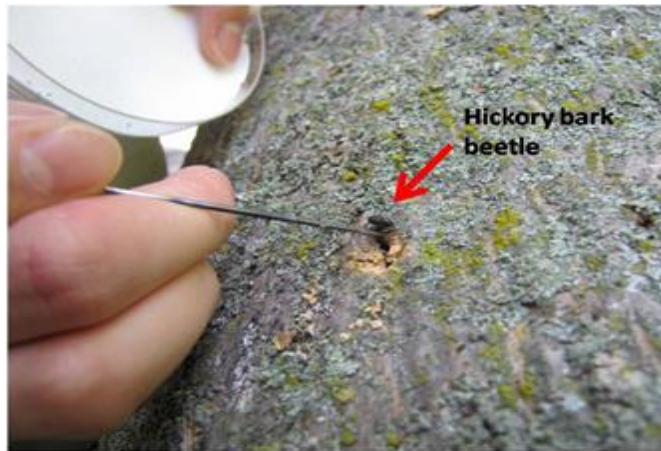


Figure 27. Hickory bark beetle attack. (Image: Dr. Jennifer Juzwik, USFS)



Figure 28. Associated cankers. (Image: Dr. Jennifer Juzwik, USFS)

Additional Pest Surveyed:

Invasive Plants

Exotic invasive species are plants that are non-native to an ecosystem and cause or are likely to cause economic or environmental harm to humans, crops, livestock, or natural plant and animal communities. The most common non-native species found in the FIA report as problematic in Iowa forests are multiflora rose, reed canary grass, bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, autumn olive, common buckthorn, Japanese barberry, and oriental bittersweet (Miles, P.D. Wed Mar 25 20:46:53 MDT 2016. [Forest Inventory DataMart](#) web-application version 1.6.0.01. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station.).

These invasive and exotic plants are out-competing native forest species, diminishing fisheries and wildlife habitat, reducing water quality, reducing economic returns from forest management and tourism, and threatening long term forest sustainability and biodiversity. In 2013 Oriental bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, and Japanese hops were made illegal to distribute in the State of Iowa.

Known Invasive Plants in Iowa 2023

Key: NP= Not Present- Not known to exist in Iowa

I= Isolated- the species is infrequent, not commonly seen

LA= Locally Abundant- the species is present but is not in the majority of the counties

W= Widespread- commonly seen in the majority of counties in large or small populations

Species	Common Name	Abundance
<i>Abutilon theophrasti</i>	Velvetleaf	W
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	tree-of-heaven	W
<i>Alliaria petiolate</i>	garlic mustard	W
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese barberry	W
<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	cheatgrass	W
<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	flowering rush	I
<i>Carduus acanthoides</i>	plumeless thistle	I
<i>Carduus nutans</i>	Musk thistle	W
<i>Celastrus orbiculata</i>	Oriental bittersweet	LA
<i>Centaurea maculosa/beibersteinii</i>	spotted knapweed	LA
<i>Centaurea repens</i>	Russian knapweed	I
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	yellow starthistle	I
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Canada thistle	W
<i>Cirsium</i> spp.	thistle	W
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	bull thistle	W
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	poison hemlock	I
<i>Coronilla varia</i>	crown vetch	W
<i>Daucus carota</i>	Queen Anne's lace	W
<i>Dipsacus fullonum/sylvestris</i>	common teasel	I
<i>Dipsacus laciniatus</i>	cutleaf teasel	I
<i>Dipsacus sativus</i>	Indian teasel	NP
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Russian olive	I
<i>Elaeagnus umbellate</i>	autumn olive	LA
<i>Euonymus alatus</i>	burning bush	LA
<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	leafy spurge	W
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Japanese knotweed	LA
<i>Frangula alnus/Rhamnus frangula</i>	glossy buckthorn	I
<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	giant hogweed	NP

Species	Common Name	Abundance
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	dame's rocket	W
<i>Humulus japonicus</i>	Japanese hop	LA
<i>Lespedeza cuneata</i>	Sericea lespedeza	I
<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>	Japanese privet	NP
<i>Ligustrum obtusifolium</i>	blunt-leaved or border privet	I
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	Chinese privet	NP
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	common or European privet	I
<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	fragrant honeysuckle	NP
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese honeysuckle	LA
<i>Lonicera maackii</i>	Amur honeysuckle	W
<i>Lonicera standishii</i>	Standish's honeysuckle	NP
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>	Tatarian honeysuckle	W
<i>Lonicera x bella</i>	Bell's honeysuckle	I
<i>Lonicera xylosteum</i>	European fly honeysuckle	NP
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	purple loosestrife	W
<i>Morus alba</i>	white mulberry	W
<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	wild parsnip	W
<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>	curlyleaf pondweed	I
<i>Pueraria montana</i>	kudzu	I
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	common buckthorn	W
<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	multiflora rose	W
<i>Tamarix</i> spp.	salt cedar	I

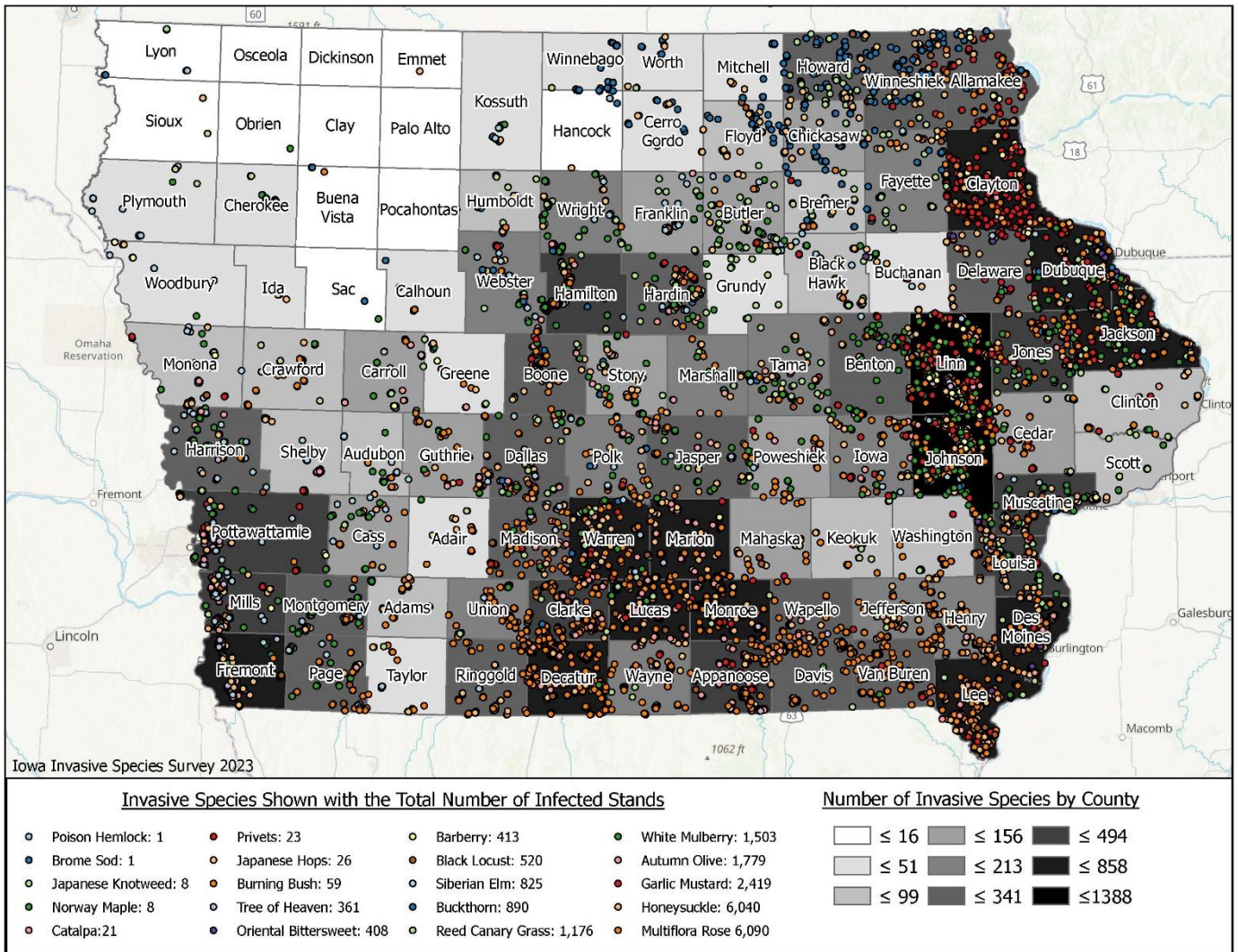


Figure 29. The map above details the locations of invasive species as identified by DNR District Foresters and the Forest Health Program Leader in 2023. (Image: Tivon Feeley, DNR)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Rapid White Oak Mortality**

Year: 2023
 State: Iowa
 Forest Pest
 Common Name: Rapid White Oak Mortality
 Scientific Name: Unknown

Hosts: Quercus alba
 Setting: Rural Forests and Urban
 Counties: SE Iowa
 Survey Methods: General Observation
 Acres Affected: Approximately 10,208 acres
 Narrative:

There have been several counties in SE Iowa where DNR has visited woodlands that had severe white oak mortality from unknown causes. The white oaks start to decline in the lower slopes and the decline/mortality quickly moves upland. The leaves turn chlorotic and within a year, the tree is complete dead. The current management plan is to aggressively harvest affected trees.

This pattern of decline is similar to what Missouri has reported over the past several years. Samples collected in 2017 indicated activity of Armillaria root disease, two-lined chestnut borer, and a variety of decline-inciting disease agents, so it is unclear of the foundational cause of mortality. Nested PCR tests for oak wilt disease have all been negative. In 2023, mortality continued, but the causes continue under investigation.

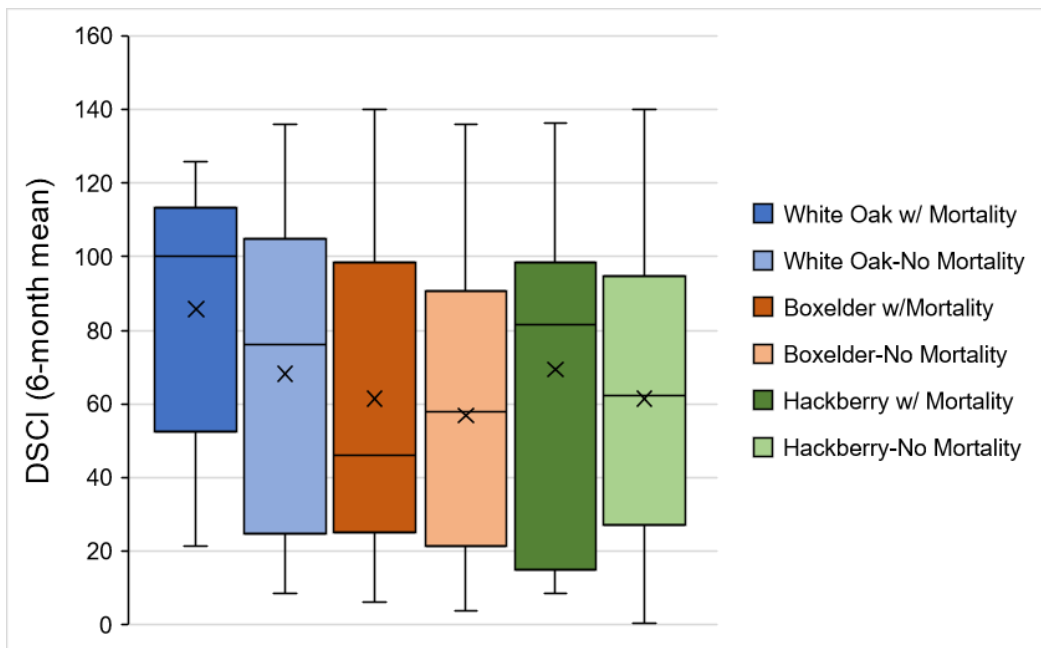


Figure 30. The figure above contrasts drought impacted sites of white oak, boxelder, and hackberry vs sites not impacted by drought. The graph shows no statistical difference in sites, suggesting that drought may not be the causal agent for the decline. (Image: FIA, USFS 2023)

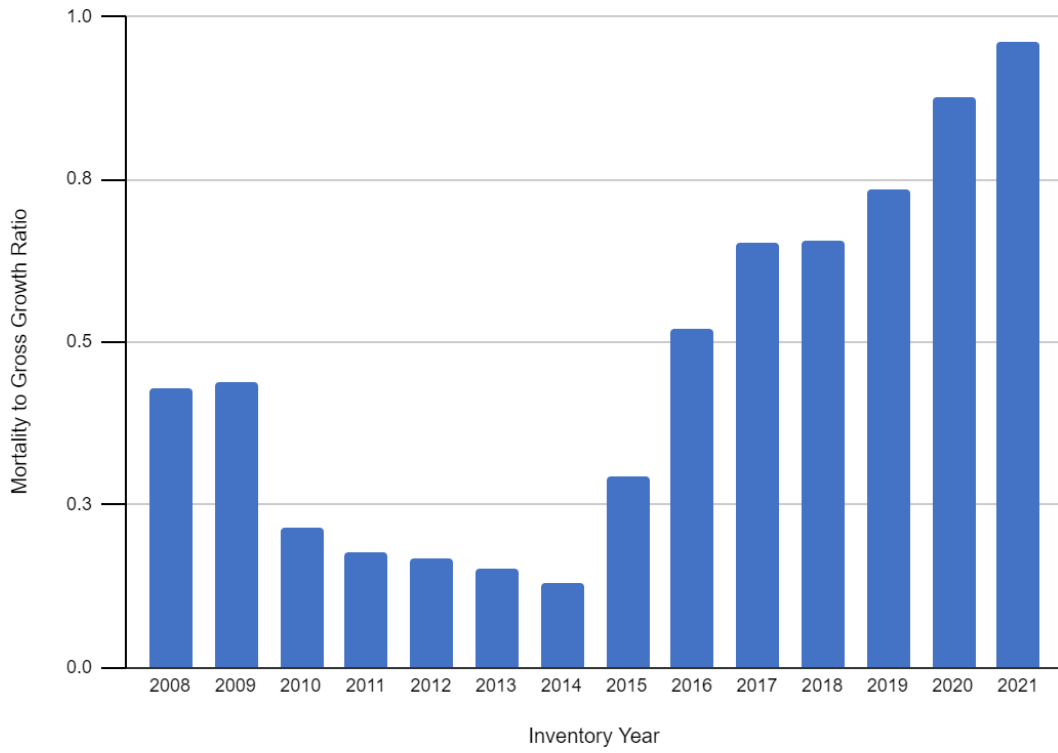


Figure 31. The figure above shows the average white oak mortality to gross growth ratio. White oak mortality was detected in the FIA date starting in the year 2015 and has steadily increased. (Figure: FIA, USFS 2023)

**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Gretchena amatana**

Year: 2023
State: Iowa
Forest Pest

Common Name: *Gretchena amatana*
Scientific Name: *Gretchena amatana*

Hosts: Walnut
Setting: Rural Forests and Urban
Counties: Isolated areas in eastern and western of Iowa
Survey Methods: N/A
Acres Affected: Unknown

Narrative: 2023 has seen a slight increased number of this native tortricid moth. Reports in northeast and southwest Iowa occurred in 2021, 2022 and again in 2023. This moth is associated with defoliation of Juglandaceae species

They first feed on buds and then become leafrollers, significantly impacting the health of infested trees. The shrouded tree trunk and appearance of the webbing by *Gretchena amatana* defoliation does not appear to have significant consequences to the affected trees there have been no indications that applied controls are warranted.



Figure 32. *Gretchena amatana* (Image: M. Sabourin - Bugguide.net)



Figure 33. Shrouded tree trunk and appearance of the webbing (Image: Oliver Cater, Iowa State University)

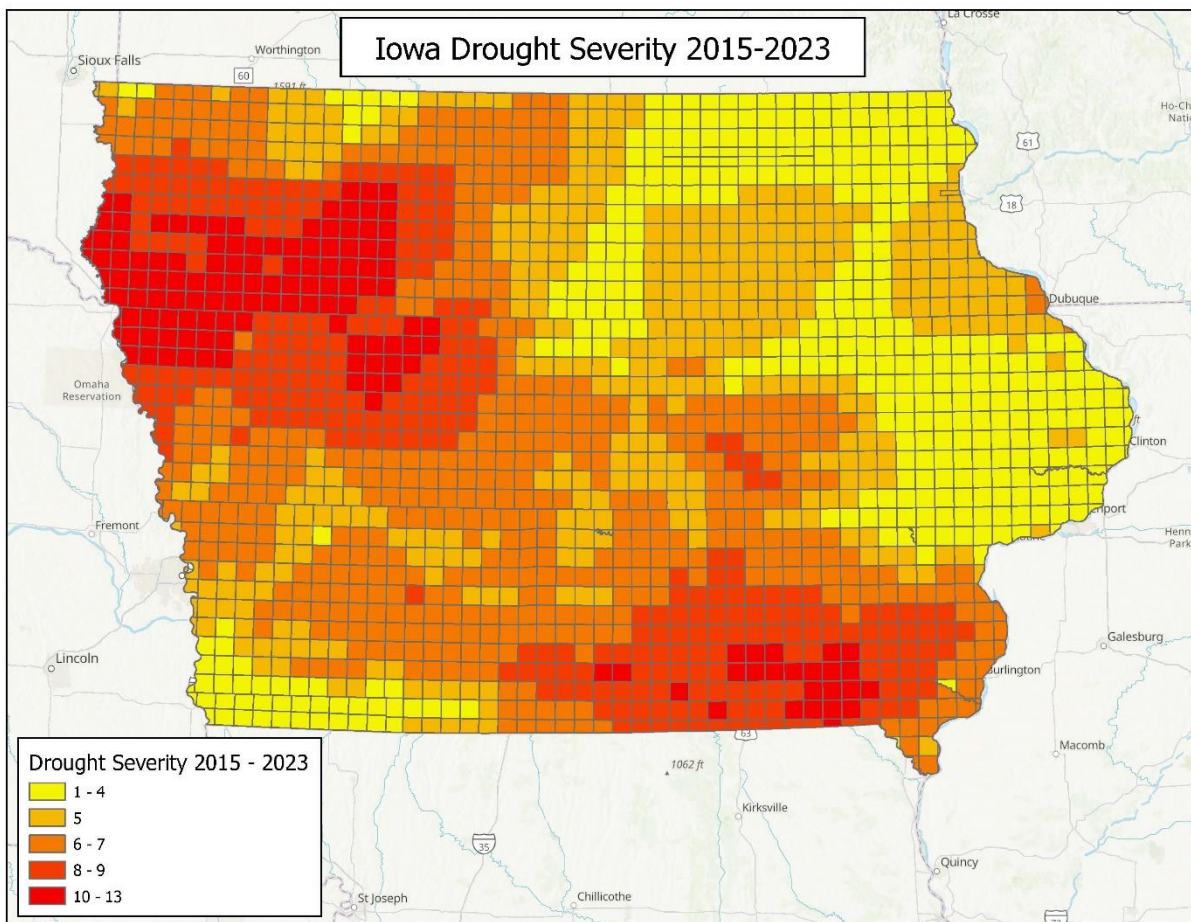
**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Drought**

Year: 2023
State: Iowa
Forest Pest
Common Name: Drought
Scientific Name: N/A

Hosts: N/A
Setting: Rural Forests and Urban
Counties: Statewide
Survey Methods: N/A
Acres Affected: Statewide
Narrative:

Above average temperatures along with lower than average accumulated precipitation has led to 12 counties experiencing extreme levels of drought while the rest of the state experienced moderate to severe conditions during August, 2024.

Average Temperature map (Left) shows areas in Iowa which experienced higher than average temperatures during the months of June 1st through August 31st, 2023. Accumulated Precipitation (Right) shows the majority of Iowa experienced a lower number of rainfall events during the months of June 1st through August 31st, 2023.



**Additional Pest Surveyed:
Oak Tatters**

Year 2023

State: Iowa

Forest Pest

Common Name: Oak Tatters

Scientific Name: N/A

Hosts: Oaks and Hackberry

Setting: Rural Forests and Urban

Counties: Statewide

Survey Methods: General and Aerial

Acres Affected: Unknown

Narrative: DNR received several phone calls of tatters on oak and hackberry in 2023. The cause of oak tatters is not known. However, a study conducted by the University of Illinois suggested that Class 5 herbicides might be causing oak tatters. This has yet to be proven in the field.

Overall, the number of reports received during 2023 were lower than average past growing seasons. DNR will continue to work with its cooperators to determine the cause of oak tatters.



Figure 34. Oak leaves showing signs of Oak tatters. (Image: Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

Conclusion

Management plays an important role in creating a healthy Iowa forest. The best insurance a person can have when managing their woodlands is diversity of tree species with the appropriate number of trees per acre. These simple management strategies may help prevent excessive tree loss from a single pest and help maintain the trees' vigor, which may make them more resistant to potentially destructive insects and diseases. The best management plan for community forests is to not have more than 10% of any one species represented. Iowa forests play an important role by providing abundant forest products and amenities, including outdoor recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, water quality, human health, and the economic benefits of a vast array of wood and wood fiber products.

Iowa's forests are facing an unprecedented level of invasive pests, chemical damage, wildlife pressure, and improper management. Emerald ash borer, Spongy moth, bur oak blight, and thousand cankers disease on walnut could have a 91.6-billion-dollar impact on Iowa's woodlands and community trees. No longer will passive management allow for woodlands to be "preserved" in the condition that they are in today. Learning about your woodlands and how each component affects another will make it easier for Iowa's woodlands to be managed for long term health. If you need technical assistance with your woodlands contact your [private lands forester](#) for assistance.

The Forestry Section, through cooperation with other agencies, has programs in place to monitor forest stressors which have potential to move into Iowa and damage our forests. Those programs operated vigorously during 2023, and plans are in place for a similar continued vigorous forest health program operation in 2023. Those programs existed in part from funding received by USFS grants and the State of Iowa Woodland Health Appropriation.

However, budget constraints limit the amount of work for important matters such as: white oak decline, aspen decline, additional oak wilt pockets, and bur oak blight. Additional funds are needed for these important forest health issues to be addressed in 2023.

DNR would like to thank its collaborators from USDA-Forest Service, USDA-APHIS-PPQ, Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and Department of Natural Resources Foresters.

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

- Franklin D. Roosevelt

Useful Phone Numbers and Websites

DNR Forestry Section has an updated [forest health page](#).

DNR maintains an [emerald ash borer resource page](#).

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship [Tree Health Page](#).

The Iowa State University Plant Disease Clinic has been assisting Iowa for nearly 50 years and is still available to answer plant disease questions. From flowers to trees they are ready to help. Contact them at 515-294-0581 or check them out on their [Plant Disease Clinic website](#).

For the creepy and crawling things on your plants, don't forget to contact [Iowa State University Extension Entomology](#). They can help you identify the insect and discover the best control measures. Contact them 515-294-1101.

Find a pesticide and its label to manage pests at [Greenbook](#).

Search for the best way to control invasive plants at the [Midwest Invasive Plant Network](#).

Check out the [DNR landowner assistance](#) web page.

DNR Forest Health Program Leader Contact Information

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