



New Emerging Ohio Pests

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Everyone has heard about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and how it has been killing ash trees across Ohio. Unfortunately, there are a large number of new potentially damaging pests which threaten our Ohio trees. The majority of these are non-native invasive insects, diseases, and other organisms which become an issue in large part due to international commerce.

Many insects are necessary for our ecosystem and several can do major damage. Learn what you should look out for.

Spotted Lanternfly



One of the new pests is the Spotted Lanternfly. This invasive pest loves to feed on the tree of heaven which is itself invasive and problematic. The Spotted Lanternfly also damages a large number of other trees and shrubs, most notably fruit trees and grapes. While the insect does not kill the trees it does weaken them and damages or destroys the fruit, making this insect a major threat to orchards and vineyards. For more information: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/invasive-pests/slf>

Asian Longhorned Beetle



Another pest we have our eyes on is the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB). This insect was found in Clermont County Ohio several years ago and eradication efforts have been underway ever since.

This large beetle does not kill trees outright but instead bores into the tree and tunnels around in the xylem after a brief stay in the vascular tissue. This weakens the tree structurally, ultimately causing branches to break off. It can take some time, but infested trees are ultimately rendered either dead or beyond repair. The good news with this pest is that eradication efforts appear to be progressing successfully.

However, new introductions are always a possibility. A new infestation was recently found in South Carolina. For more information: <https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/plant-health/invasive-pests/alb>



Boxwood Blight Fungus

There are several new pests threatening boxwoods. The Boxwood Blight fungus is potentially very destructive and can kill whole plantings of boxwood. This blight has been confirmed at many locations in Ohio landscapes. Some boxwoods have been found to be resistant to the disease and these varieties should be favored when

doing new plantings. Aggressive fungicide application programs can keep spread of the disease in check, but already infested shrubs should be removed and destroyed. A great website and clearing house for information, including treatment protocols and resistant boxwood varieties, can be found here:

<https://ext.vt.edu/agriculture/commercial-horticulture/boxwood-blight.html>

Box Tree Moth



The Box Tree Moth is an insect which threatens boxwoods. The moth is native to East Asia. It was discovered in southern Germany and the Netherlands in 2007 and has now been found in 30 European countries. The moth was found in Canada in 2018 infesting landscape boxwoods.

Between August 2020 and April 2021, a nursery in Ontario shipped boxwoods, which may have been infested, to six states including Ohio. At this time, the pest has been identified in three of the states where the infested material was shipped, but not in landscapes. The Ohio Department of Agriculture has intercepted and destroyed most



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of these plants and we are hoping that eradication will be successful. With this pest established so close to our north this remains an insect we need to be looking out for.

Laurel Wilt Disease



Laurel Wilt disease is a serious and deadly fungal disease of members of the laurel family that is spread by an ambrosia beetle. Mountain laurel is not susceptible to this disease but trees like sassafras and shrubs like spicebush.

Up until about a year ago this disease had been confined to the southeast coastal areas of the United States. However, 2021, the disease was found in western Kentucky and has now been found in 13 Kentucky counties as far northeast as Louisville in Jefferson County.

While neither sassafras nor spicebush make up major components of our forests as did ash, both plants are significant contributors to our ecology and their loss would be tragic. Both sassafras and spicebush have been infected in Kentucky and are dying in the infected counties. What is unknown, since spicebush is a shrub, is at what stage of growth spicebush could be expected to be infested. Thus far only spicebush growing near sassafras have been infected. There is some thought that's smaller spicebush which are separate from sassafras may still be able to survive. This disease is also a threat to avocado production. For more information: <https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/laurel-wilt>

Lesser Celandine



Not all pests are insects or diseases. Lesser celandine is taking over forests and landscapes in southern Ohio. This non-native plant from Europe has leaves which look like violets and beautiful golden flowers. However, looks can be deceiving as this plant is extremely aggressive and crowds out native wildflowers and plants. This plant is potentially environmentally disastrous and should be eradicated when it is found. Other plants which also fit in this category of being potentially environmentally disastrous include Amur honeysuckle and Callery pear. For more information: <https://bygl.osu.edu/node/1016>

Spongy Moth



The spongy moth, *Lymantria dispar dispar*, (formerly European gypsy moth) is a non-native, invasive species that has moved west into Ohio from Pennsylvania and Michigan. Each egg mass a female lays contains between 500-1,000 individual eggs; once hatched they are able to feed on the leaves of over 300 different tree and shrub species. One 2-inch larvae can consume up to 1 square foot of foliage every 24 hours. In heavily infested areas, where there are 250 or more egg masses per acre, the spongy moth is able to completely strip the infested trees. A healthy tree can usually withstand only two years of defoliation before it is permanently damaged or

dies. To date, 51 of Ohio's 88 counties have established populations and are under state and federal quarantine rules. For more information: [Spongy Moth | Ohio Department of Agriculture](#)

Oak Wilt



Oak wilt is a serious and often deadly vascular disease of oaks. The fungal pathogen, *Bretziella fagacearum* (formerly *Ceratocystis fagacearum*), is known to occur in North America, but its origin is currently unknown. The pathogen is distributed throughout the Midwest and Texas. Over the years, and with variable frequency, it has been reported from the majority of the 88 Ohio counties. For more information: [Oak Wilt | Ohioline \(osu.edu\)](#)



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