



Cornell University

College of Agriculture and
Life Sciences

Department of Natural Resources

Fernow Hall

Ithaca, New York 14853

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Mark Whitmore

Department of Natural Resources

Cornell University

Email: mcw42@cornell.edu

Ph: 607 280-4064

TOP SCIENTISTS GATHER TO COMBAT NE FOREST INVADERS

Regional stakeholders to develop management strategies based on experts' knowledge

ITHACA, NY – October 28, 2008 – Three invasive insects have struck fear in the hearts of government officials, natural area managers, and forest owners across the Northeast, particularly New York State. The combined action of the Asian Longhorned Beetle, Emerald Ash Borer, and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid pose tremendous threats to the Eastern forests, and could irreparably change the look and function of this valued ecosystem.

Experts from Cornell University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and other institutions across the Northeast will convene on Thursday, October 30, in Ithaca, New York, to discuss the biology, impacts, and management of these sinister insects during the Invasive Non-Native Forest Pest Conference. The conference program will feature presentations and panel discussions about current research, management options, and the potential ecological havoc these pests will wreak on the region's forests.

“We’re bringing together stakeholders and scientists at a critical time,” said Jerry Carlson, Chief of Forest Health and Protection for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, a co-sponsor of Thursday’s event. “New York is facing serious forest insect invasions that have the potential to cost its citizens millions of dollars. It is essential that we anticipate the arrival and spread of invaders and provide our resource professionals and government officials with the most effective management tools available.”

First discovered in Brooklyn in 1996, and then later in Staten Island, New Jersey, and Chicago, the Asian Longhorned Beetle has most recently been discovered in Worcester, Massachusetts. Since its discovery in August 2008, at least 1,500 hardwood trees, including maples, elms, and willows, have been found to be infested within the 62-square-mile quarantine area and have been marked for removal. The large black beetles with mottled white spots and long antennae chew holes in the bark of host trees where females lay eggs. Larvae feed under the bark in the tree’s living tissue and effectively girdle the tree stems and branches, causing dieback and eventually tree death. Local, state, and federal officials are most alarmed by the present infestation’s proximity to the hardwood forests of New England.

-OVER-

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an iridescent green beetle about the size of a penny, was first detected in Detroit in 2002 and has since spread to 10 states and two Canadian provinces. Native to eastern Asia, the EAB kills all species of ash trees in North America; in Michigan alone, it has killed more than 40 million trees. Although not yet detected in New York State, the EAB has spread to Ohio, Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Quebec. Officials agree that it is just a matter of time before EAB arrives in New York State, where it is certain to cost municipalities, property owners, nursery operators, and forest products industries millions of dollars.

The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), a tiny sap-feeding insect from Asia, is a serious pest on eastern and Carolina hemlocks. First discovered in the US in the 1920s, its distribution in the eastern US now extends from northeastern Georgia to southeastern Maine and west to eastern Tennessee. The HWA sucks sap from the base of the hemlock needles, causing needles to dry out and drop; the defoliation can cause a heavily infested tree to die in just a few years. The HWA was detected in Tompkins County, NY, for the first time in July 2008, and there is great concern that its spread throughout upstate New York will decimate natural stands of hemlock in parks and natural areas as well as homeowners' valued plantings.

The Invasive Non-native Forest Pest Conference will be held from 8:30am-6:00pm on Thursday, October 30, 2008, at the Ramada Inn in Ithaca, NY. The full conference agenda, speaker biographies, and registration information can be found at: www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/infpc/

The Invasive Non-native Forest Pest Conference is sponsored by:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Cornell University, Department of Natural Resources and Department of Entomology
- NY Invasive Species Research Institute
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Department of Environmental and Forest Biology and Department of Forest and Natural Resource Management
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of Invasive Species Coordination and the Forest Health and Protection Section of the Lands and Forest Division
- New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey
- United States Forest Service, Northern Research Station.

-END-

Invasive Non-Native Forest Pest Conference

Thursday, October 30, 2008 at the Ramada Inn, Ithaca, NY.

Agenda

- 8:30 am** **Welcome.** Jerry Carlson, Research Scientist and Chief of Forest Health & Protection, NYSDEC.
- 8:40** **Keynote. Forest Entomology in New York: the perspective of time and future challenges in a changing landscape.**
Dr. Doug Allen, Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, Department of Environmental & Forest Biology, SUNY-ESF.
- 9:05** **Invasion by non-native forest insect pests: an historical assessment of patterns and trends in North America.**
E. Richard Hoebeke, Senior Extension Associate, Department of Entomology, Cornell University.

Basic biology and current research:

- 9:30** **Emerald Ash Borer. Biology, impacts, status, and current research.**
Dr. Melissa Fierke, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental & Forest Biology, SUNY-ESF.
- 9:55** **Asian Long-horned Beetle. Biology, impacts, status, and current research.** Dr. Ann Hajek, Professor, Department of Entomology, Cornell University.
- 10:20** **Coffee Break**
- 10:35** **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Biology, impacts, status, and current research.** Dr. Melody Keena, Research Entomologist, USFS, Northern Research Station, Hamden, CT.

Management Strategies:

- 11:00** **Overview of strategies for managing the onslaught of pest invasions.**
Dr. Andrew Liebhold, Research Entomologist, USFS, Northern Research Station, Morgantown, WV.
- 11:25** **Chemical attractants in the management of non-native forest insects.**
Dr. Steve Teale, Associate Professor, Environmental & Forest Biology, SUNY-ESF.

11:50 Biocontrol strategies for management of invasive non-native forest insect pests. Dr. Joe Elkinton, Professor, Department of Plant Soil and Insect Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

12:15 pm Lunch

1:00 Prospects for microbial control of invasive non-native forest insect pests. Dr. John Vandenberg, Research Entomologist, USDA ARS Bio-IPM Research Unit; Adjunct Professor, Department of Entomology, Cornell University.

1:25 Panel Discussion.

Ecological Impacts of Invasive Forest Pests:

2:15 Non-native pest invasions and forest change. Dr. Andrew Liebhold. Research Entomologist, USFS, Northern Research Station, Morgantown, WV.

2:40 Invasive pests and forest ecosystem dynamics. Dr. Tim Fahey, Professor, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University.

3:05 Coffee Break

3:20 The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the impact on forest composition and watershed processes in the Appalachian Mountains. Dr. Chris Swan. Assistant Professor, Department of Geography & Environmental Systems, University of Maryland.

3:45 A silvicultural perspective on non-native insect invasions. Dr. Ralph Nyland, Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Forest & Natural Resources Management, SUNY-ESF.

4:10 Panel Discussion

5:00 Reception