



South Carolina Forestry Commission



Figure 1. Southern pine beetle spots along Lake Keowee in Oconee County.

FOREST HEALTH

2024 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS

The Resource

South Carolina's forest cover 12.9 million acres, which is 67% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land is in nonindustrial private ownership, covering about 11.4 million acres, with approximately 629,000 acres in national forests.

Forestry is the most important manufacturing industry in South Carolina, providing 84,000 jobs and a total economic impact of \$21 billion annually. \$1.3 billion in forest products are exported from South Carolina and forest products are the number one export commodity from the port of Charleston. Trees are South Carolina's number one harvested crop. South Carolina's forests are known for their scenic beauty, attracting tourism, outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Major forest types in South Carolina include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, once more widespread, now make up four percent of South Carolina's forests, with other minor forest types accounting for an additional six percent.

Forest Issues and Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB)/Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.)

Spring trapping for southern pine beetle indicated populations of SPB in Edgefield, McCormick, Pickens, Oconee, Charleston and Berkeley counties. SPB outbreaks were only detected in McCormick County (less than 10 acres) and Pickens and Oconee counties (approx.. 1,000 acres).

Asian longhorned beetle

As of November 16, 2024, 11,463 infested trees had been detected and 6,506 of these have been removed. The quarantined area now includes 76.38 square miles but may expand in the near future as infested trees are found near the edges. Prospects for eradication from the state look good. Studies indicate that the beetle had been in Charleston at least since 2008.

Redbay mortality (laurel wilt disease)

Caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola* and vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) laurel wilt has killed many redbay trees along South Carolina's coast and continues to spread along bottomlands in the interior of the state. We continue to see sassafras infected.

Cogongrass

As of 2024 a total of 17 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified in seven counties. Of these, only three remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive. Infestations by county are: Anderson 1 inactive, Beaufort 4 (four inactive), Charleston 5 (five inactive), Hampton 4 (3 active and 1 inactive), Williamsburg 1 (inactive), Florence 1 (inactive), and Colleton 1 (inactive).

Oak wilt

Oak wilt continued to be reported from sites in sandbelt counties, including Aiken, Barnwell, Lexington, Kershaw, and Florence.

Brown spot needle blight on loblolly

We are continuing to survey for needle blights but finding very few infections this year.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For more information or assistance, please contact:

South Carolina Forestry Commission

PO Box 21707

Columbia, SC 29221

(803) 667-1002

djenkins@scfc.gov

USDA Forest Service

Southern Region, State & Private Forestry

Forest Health Protection

200 W.T. Weaver Road

Asheville, NC 28804

(828) 257-4320