

PEST PREVENTION TRAINING

An advanced education program for those on the front lines protecting Hawai'i

Laurel Wilt

Raffaelea lauricola

Not known to be present in Hawaii

An Laurel wilt is the disease caused by pathogenic plant fungus carried by the introduced redbay ambrosia beetle. Both the fungus and the beetle have spread throughout 12 states in the Southeastern US and killed millions of trees since first detected in 2002.





Affecting species of trees in the Lauraceae family, Laurel wilt is a threat to agriculture and the environment.



Dark vertical staining in the sapwood could indicate laurel wilt.



Impacts

- Once infected, trees rapidly wilt and die within weeks. There is no cure for the disease.
- Over 50 different species in the Lauraceae family are at risk.
- Commercial and backyard avocado growers are at risk as trees throughout the infested area have been destroyed.

Identification

- Drooping discolored leaves.
- Brown leaves that stay on branches as though frozen.
- Discoloration in the outer sapwood running along the grain.
- Presence of small, 1-2mm (1/16th inch) dark entrance and exit holes made by the associated redbay ambrosia beetle.



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Vectors/Commodities

- Both the fungus and disease arrived in the U.S. from a single introduction of wooden packing material.
- The redbay ambrosia beetle spread the disease between infected trees locally.
- Moving any infested wood products firewood, logs, brush, limbs, and timber commodities helps spread the disease to new areas.



Distribution

 Native to Asia, the disease is known to be present in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, North Carolina, Louisiana, Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Virginia.



Best Managment Practices

- This species is not known to occur in Hawaii. Prevention and early detection efforts protect Hawaii's nursery and agricultural industry and environment.
- Consider sourcing options and the presence of laurel wilt distribution when purchasing plants.
- BOLO: Be on the lookout! Carefully inspect species in the Lauraceae family (avocado, bay laurel, camphor trees) for indications of the disease.
- Report any suspect signs of Laurel wilt to 643pest.org or by phone 643-PEST (7378).



Selected References:

Joseph Benzel, Colorado State

Joseph Benzel, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org Moving infested wood long-distance moves the disease to new areas. Invasive redbay ambrosia beetle spreads the disease locally.



Laurel Wilt Distribution by County, based on the date of detection. Last updated 2021 USDA. FS. Forest Health Protection. Southern Region.



White frass from the boring holes of the ambrosia beetle that vectors the disease

- Laurel Wilt Resources, National Invasive Species Resource Center https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/pathogens-and-diseases/laurel-wilt/resources
- Laurel Wilt Profile, Emerging Pathogens Institute, University of Florida https://www.epi.ufl.edu/pathogens/plant-pathogens/laurel-wilt/

This material was made possible, in part, by a Cooperative Agreement from the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Itmay not necessarily express APHIS's views.



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