New “Mesoamerican Pine Beetle” Described by SRS Scientist and Collaborators

A newly-discovered species of tree-killing bark beetle in Central America, *Dendroctonus mesoamericanus*, has been recently described by a group of scientists including Southern Research Station (SRS) research entomologist Dr. Brian Sullivan (SRS 4552, Pineville, LA). Numerous studies by a team of scientists from the U.S., Mexico and Norway determined that the species is new to science and provided information needed to manage the insect, which may share responsibility with the southern pine beetle (*Dendroctonus frontalis*) for the catastrophic damage to pines in Central America in recent years. The two *Dendroctonus* species appear to work in cooperation to kill trees, and outbreaks of both may be more persistent and destructive than those of southern pine beetle alone. This discovery brings to light a potential exotic threat to the U.S. that was not previously known to exist. Read the full paper in the Annals of the Entomological Society of America (http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/47987).

For more information contact Brian Sullivan at briansullivan@fs.fed.us.

Laurel wilt disease confirmed in sassafras in Louisiana

Laurel wilt, a deadly disease of redbay and other trees in the Laurel family, was confirmed for the first time in the state of Louisiana in the fall of 2014. A private landowner in Bernice, LA and an NRCS forester sought assistance from the Forest Health Protection (FHP) Alexandria Field Office after noting the rapid death of several mature sassafras trees. Plant pathologist Roger Menard and entomologist Wood Johnson examined nine trees with symptoms consistent with laurel wilt.

(Continued on Page 2)
Plant pathologists Steve Fraedrich (SRS 4552) and Tom Harrington (Iowa State University) later isolated the laurel wilt pathogen (*Raffaelea lauricola*) from several of these trees, and specimens of the beetle vector (*Xyleborus glabratus*) were also collected. Subsequent surveys in Louisiana using beetle traps and wood tissue analysis indicated the disease is present in Union, Claiborne, and Lincoln Parishes. All cases thus far have been found in otherwise healthy sassafras, and either open-grown or located on forest edges. An expanded survey will be conducted in 2015 involving the LA Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry and the AR Forestry Commission. In addition to sassafras, laurel wilt has killed millions of redbay trees throughout the Southeastern U.S. and also kills avocado.

For more information please contact Wood Johnson at woodjohnson@fs.fed.us.

**In the News**

**Mike Ulyshen receives US Forest Service Early Career Scientist Award**

After receiving the 2014 Southern Research Station Director’s Early Career Scientist Award, Dr. Mike Ulyshen (SRS 4552, Athens GA) was subsequently honored at the national level by receiving the USDA Forest Service Early Career Scientist Award in February 2015. Mike’s highly-productive research program has included biology of the redbay ambrosia beetle, biodiversity impacts of Chinese privet, biological control of emerald ash borer, and ecological roles of wood decaying organisms. Mike was presented with the award in Washington D.C. by Jim Reaves, Forest Service Deputy Chief for Research and Development.

**Forest Service participates in Children’s Mardi Gras Parade, Alexandria, LA**

USFS employees along with Smokey Bear shared wildfire prevention awareness with the 2015 Children’s Mardi Gras Parade crowd in Alexandria, LA. The parade attracts tens of thousands of people from all over central Louisiana and neighboring states. The USFS float had families from the Kisatchie National Forest, the Southern Research Station and State & Private Forestry aboard to pass out Smokey Bear items, a favorite for the parade attendees.
Georgia Science & Engineering Fair
Mary Williams (SRS 4552, Athens GA) served a judge at the 67th Georgia Science & Engineering Fair on March 27, 2015. Middle and High School Students from all across the state enter this competition every year, set up exhibits, answer questions and discuss their work.

Participants in the 67th Georgia Science and Engineering Fair.

Technology Transfer

Publications (in print/press):


Submitted Publications (in review):


**Presentations and Lectures:**


