

Pest Alert:

Pine Shoot Beetle

The pine shoot beetle, an invasive species that stunts the growth of pine trees, has been found in five New Jersey counties. The beetle, a native of Europe discovered most recently in the United States in 1992, attacks new shoots of pine trees. It also can attack stressed pines by breeding under the bark at the base of the tree. The beetle can seriously harm the health of trees and even kill them when present in large enough numbers. The beetles prefer Scotch pines, but will feed and reproduce in most pine species. While the beetle can seriously harm the health of pine trees, and even kill them, it can be easily managed in Christmas tree plantations and nurseries. The beetles do not attack Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, Douglas-Fir, and Fraser Fir, which are commonly grown as Christmas trees.

As of now, there have been a limited number of these beetles found in surveillance traps in New Jersey. Many northeastern states already have widespread populations of this beetle, and there are varying approaches to stopping its spread. However working with the industry, we will take all necessary steps in New Jersey to limit the impact of this invasive pest on our Christmas tree and nursery industries.

The beetles, first found in Cleveland, Ohio, and believed to have entered the country in ships carrying infested dunnage, were found recently in some counties in the northern part of the state. The Division of Plant Industry is reviewing the options for handling this situation under USDA protocols.

Since 1992, the beetles have been detected in all Great Lakes states, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. The beetles also have been found in West Virginia, Virginia, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. To see more about the pine shoot beetle, please visit the NJ Department of Agriculture's Pine Shoot Beetle web page at: www.state.nj.us/agriculture/pineshootbeetle.htm.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the Division of Plant industry at 609/292-5440. Working together, we can ensure public confidence in our state's horticultural products.