OREGON TREE HEALTH THREATS

April 2026

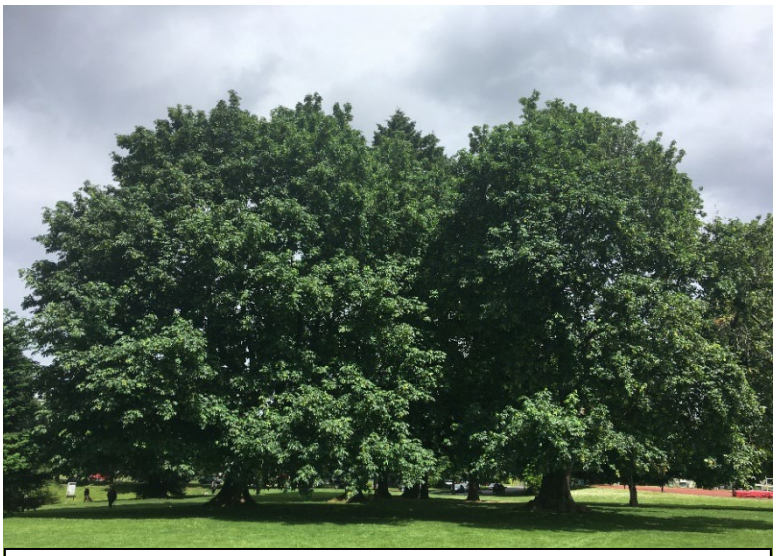
This monthly newsletter gives updates and resources on emerging threats to the health of Oregon's trees in natural and managed landscapes. It is published by the Oregon Department of Forestry in collaboration with other state, regional, federal, Tribal, and local agencies and organizations. To subscribe, email jim.gersbach@odf.oregon.gov

In this issue:

New ODF map of Willamette Valley hardwoods will help landowners plan for threats

The Forest Health Unit at the Oregon Department of Forestry has published a map displaying where the most common native hardwood species occur in the Willamette Valley, including:

- bigleaf maple *(Acer macrophyllum)*
- black cottonwood *(Populus trichocarpa)*
- Oregon white oak *(Quercus garryana)*
- Oregon ash *(Fraxinus latifolia)*
- Red alder *(Alnus rubra)*



A new ODF map will help landowners distinguish among five common Oregon hardwood trees, like these bigleaf maples.

The maps also show three outgroups - conifers, European filbert or hazelnut *(Corylus avellana)*, and urban street trees. While not the focus of the project, including the three outgroups was necessary given how much of the Willamette Valley they cover. The conifers and urban street trees are a mix of many different species.

ODF created the map using satellite imagery from the European Space Agency's Sentinel 2 mission. Staff delineated patches of each native hardwood and outgroup using high-resolution aerial imagery. They then used machine learning to predict and map the occurrence of these species and outgroups throughout the Willamette Valley based on the spectral signatures of the field-verified training patches. With the help of numerous partner agencies, ODF collected an independent sample of field-verified locations of hardwoods species to test the accuracy of our map. The map predicted the correct species for 70.5% of the validation sites. A majority of the errors in classification were between red alder and bigleaf maple.

Details on methods used to create the map can be found in the "Willamette Valley Hardwoods Background Information" document accompanying the map.

"We hope this map will help federal, state, municipal, and Tribal governments; non-profit organizations, private companies, and the general public better understand the where common native hardwood species can be found throughout the Willamette Valley," said ODF's Sean McKenzie, who led the project. "In the Willamette Valley emerald ash borer, Mediterranean oak borer, and sooty bark disease are starting to affect Oregon ash, Oregon white oak, and bigleaf maple, respectively. We hope this map will help land managers to plan, prioritize, and implement monitoring and management efforts in response to these emerging forest health concerns."

Oregon Legislature comes up with $1.8 million to battle Japanese beetle

Oregon House Bill 5204 allocated $1.8 million to allow the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) to continue its Japanese beetle *(Popillia japonica)* program over the 2026 and 2027 crop years. During the 2025 legislative session funding was not allocated for the program.

Above: Japanese beetle (Popillia japonica). Photo courtesy of ODA.

Although present in Oregon since the 1980s, the largest infestation of Japanese beetle was found in 2016 in the Cedar Mill, Bonny Slope, Oak Hills, and Bethany areas of Washington County. Smaller populations were later found in Clackamas and Multnomah counties. In 2025 one beetle was found in each of Marion and Union counties. The beetle is a concern to farmers and homeowners, attacking more than 300 different species of plants, including important farm crops and many urban trees.

ODA's persistent work to eliminate Japanese beetle from the state reduced beetle numbers by 65% from last year and by 92% since 2016. Recent survey data for 2025 showed that 1,918

beetles were trapped across Oregon, with most captured at a single site in Washington County.

This renewed investment reflects a strong commitment to the agency's mission to protect Oregon and promote key agricultural sectors. The Department can now address all new detections in its 2026 work. Learn more here.

Finding resistance to white pine blister rust offers hope for whitebark pines

Since the early 20th century arrival of white pine blister rust to the U.S., millions of five-needled pines have been killed. Western white pines, sugar pines, and especially high-elevation whitebark pines have been devastated by the fungal disease.

Now, according to a March 12 Oregon Public Broadcasting story, researchers at the U.S. Forest Service's Dorena Genetic Resource Center report renewed hope for the latter species. A number of the trees have been found to be resistant to the fungus. Seedlings from these trees are being grown and planted out in areas hard-hit by white pine blister rust, such as at Crater Lake National Park.

Read more about the campaign to save whitebark pine here.

Photo at right: Seedlings of whitebark pine at Dorena Genetic Resource Center show varying degrees of resistance or vulnerability to white pine blister rust.

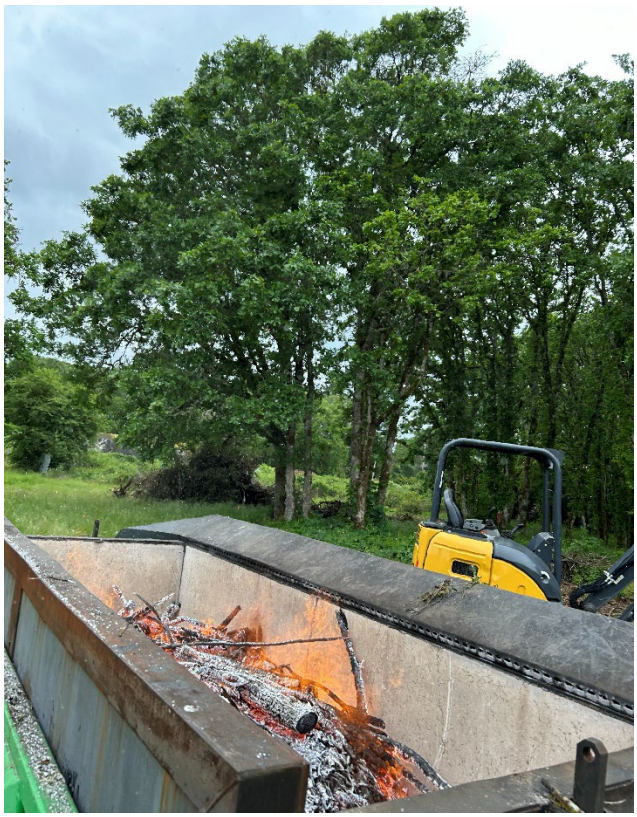
Spruce aphid outbreaks expected in wake of record warm winter temps

The record warm winter of 2025/2026 may prompt outbreaks of spruce aphid in Sitka spruce along the Oregon coast. This insect feeds on prior-year foliage. Because new growth on the trees is not affected, the aphids rarely cause tree death. More information can be found here.

ODF to hold air curtain incinerator demonstration burns in April and May

The Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Program will be holding a series of air curtain incinerator (ACI) demonstrations in central and eastern Oregon, and the upper Willamette Valley in April and May. If you are unfamiliar with ACIs, here is a brief introductory video.

These events are for land managers, conservation organizations, tree-care companies, municipalities, and anyone having to deal with wood waste and biomass on private or public land in Oregon. Staff will demonstrate how ACIs can be used as a tool for biomass reduction and carbon sequestration in wood sanitization, wood waste utilization, and fuels reduction projects. Using ACIs reduces smoke and air pollution compared to pile burning. Join one of these events and participate in a discussion on how ACIs can be used throughout Oregon. Please share this information with others in your network who may be interested.



Space is limited, so sign up to attend one of these events today. If you have any questions, please reach out to InvasivePests@odf.oregon.gov To sign up, just click on the link after the event you'd like to attend.

- *Thursday, April 9th, 11am – 1 pm. Meachum https://beav.es/aci-umatilla*
- *Friday, April 10th, 11am – 1 pm. John Day https://beav.es/aci-grant*
- *Saturday, April 11th, 11:45 am -- 1:30 pm. Prineville https://beav.es/aci-demo*

Part of the Prineville Wildfire Preparedness Fair

- *Thursday, April 30th, 11am – 1 pm. Salem https://forms.office.com/g/gid4QdxSfY*

Includes a tour of the Marion County Juvenile Diversion Program wood waste utilization lot

- *Wednesday, May 6th, 12:30 pm – 2 pm Portland https://forms.office.com/g/XXfPEvzSnv*
- *Wednesday, May 12th, 10:30 am – 2 pm. Polk County https://forms.office.com/g/YF95C9Nv8g*

Entomology Today story calls flood of new invasives a biosecurity risk

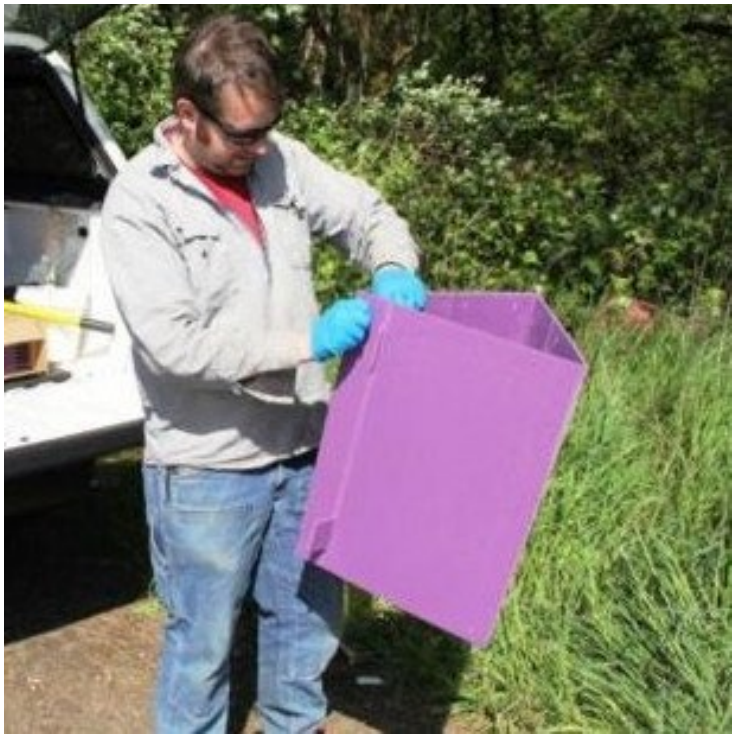
The March 13, 2026 edition of *Entomology Today* carries a story by Jiri Hulcr, Ph.D. warning that the rise in numbers of destructive invasive pests is a national biosecurity risk. Hulcr is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida and a principal investigator with the University of Florida Forest Entomology Lab. Hulcr writes:

In reality, the avalanche of invasive pests and diseases is one of the largest environmental catastrophes unfolding in front of our eyes, second only to climate change. The impact from this mixing of organisms is in trillions of dollars globally and over $2 billion just to the U.S. in direct annual damage. Lots of the damage is incalculable, beyond money. How much value are we losing by having entire tree species wiped out from our landscapes by invasive pests and diseases? How do we calculate the impact of this foreign pest pressure when it prevents farmers from growing fruit without insecticides? Or when they cannot farm at all, and lifestyles and industries are lost? Invasive species are becoming a national biosecurity crisis.

You can read the full story here.

May 2 workshop for landowners will provide updates on EAB trapping

Marion Soil and Water Conservation District is holding a hands-on workshop for landowners focused on emerald ash borer detection and community monitoring. Participants will receive a brief overview of EAB, learn how to recognize signs of an EAB infestation, and hear updates on local trapping efforts underway in Marion County. Attendees will practice setting an EAB trap and receive one to take home and install on their property, helping expand our local monitoring network and support early detection of this invasive pest.



The workshop will be:

• May 2, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Porter Boone Park, 1105 Main Street, Aumsville, 97325

This workshop is intended for landowners and land managers who have Oregon ash forests along streams and wetlands, or with woodlands containing this tree. Each participant will receive a trap to install and monitor on their property. Due to a limited number of traps, space is limited to 20 participants. *RSVP is required*. Please register at Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Trapping Workshop.

Tryon Creek State Natural Area to host EAB and MOB workshop April 18

Join the Oswego Lake Watershed Council for a free workshop April 18 to support forest health and preparedness. The class is funded by the City of Lake Oswego's Municipal Grant program, supporting the implementation of the Urban and Community Forestry Plan.

Registration is required. Register here.

Date and time

- Saturday, April 18 | 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Location

- Friends of Tryon Creek Education Pavilion
  11321 SW Terwilliger Blvd, Portland, OR 97219

Marion SWCD has put three EAB-related talks online

Now available online are two EAB-related talks organized by Marion Soil and Water Conservation. The talks are:

- The Feb. 6 Zoom presentation by the Oregon Dept. of Forestry's Kat Bethea and Matt Mills providing an overview of EAB and how landowners can manage it. Listen here.

- The March 6 talk on biocontrol agents for EAB by Oregon by Oregon Dept. of Agriculture's Max Ragozzino and Colin Park from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Listen here.

- The March 18 radio program talk on Salem's EAB management. The talk by Salem Urban Forester Milan Davis aired originally on the First Friday series called "Conservation Spotlight." Salem is actively treating a majority of its street and park ash trees in good to preserve canopy. EAB has not yet been confirmed in Salem, but the pest has been detected only 25 miles away and could arrive in the near future. Listen here.

Publications

- ***Sequestration of plant defenses by spotted lanternfly (Lycorma delicatula) and effects on avian predators.*** by Anne E. Johsnon, Allison Cornell, Fang Zhu, Ashley E. Shay, Gabrielle Davis and Kelli Hoover. Pennsylvania State University. Journal of Chemical Ecology Oct. 23, 2025. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10886-025-01647-6

- ***A Valley Without Ash: Exploring Strategies for Forested Wetland Restoration Post Emerald Ash Borer Invasion in the Willamette Valley, Oregon*** by Hull, Chloe (2024). OSU. https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/graduate_projects/3j333b36w

- ***Genomics-Driven Monitoring of Fraxinus latifolia (Oregon Ash) to Inform Conservation and EAB-Resistance Breeding'*** *by Melton, A.E., Faske, T.M., Sniezko, R.A., Thibault, T., Williams, W., Parchman, T. and Hamilton, J.A. (2025), Molecular Ecology e17640. https://doi.org/10.1111/mec.17640*

- ***Monitoring Oregon ash forests in the face of the emerald ash borer: A guide for small woodland owners and managers***

  https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/em-9451-monitoring-oregon-ash-forests-face-emerald-ash-borer

- ***Larval development and parasitism of emerald ash borer* (Agrilus planipennis) *in Oregon ash* (Fraxinus latifolia) *and European olive* (Olea europaea): *implications for the West Coast invasion***

  Journal of Economic Entomology | Oxford Academic

- ***Modelling impacts to water quality in salmonid-bearing waterways following the introduction of emerald ash borer in the Pacific Northwest, USA.*** Maze, D., Bond, J. & Mattsson, M. *Biol Invasions* (2024). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-024-03340-3

- ***Alternatives to Ash in Western Oregon: With a Critical Tree Under Threat, These Options Can Help Fill Habitat Niche.*** G. Kral, and D.C. Shaw. 2023. OSU Extension EM 9396. https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9396

- ***Oregon Ash: Insects, Pathogens and Tree Health*** by Oregon State University Extension (also available in Spanish at this same website)
  https://extension.oregonstate.edu/pub/em-9380

- ***Wood Decay Fungi Associated with Galleries of the Emerald Ash Borer*** by the University of Minnesota and Uruguay's *Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria*
  Forests | Free Full-Text | Wood Decay Fungi Associated with Galleries of the Emerald Ash Borer (mdpi.com)

Useful links for more information

Past *Oregon Tree Health Threats Bulletins* (2023 to present)
https://oregon-eab-geo.hub.arcgis.com/pages/latest-news

Roundup of Oregon-specific EAB information including where to report new EAB sightings
www.OregonEAB.com

Mediterranean oak borer fact sheet
https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestbenefits/fact-sheet-mediterranean-oak-borer.pdf

Map to find where EAB is currently confirmed in Oregon
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9f29b1860cb04d36ad71b122148277f3

EAB monitoring guidance
https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/Documents/eab-monitoring-guidance.pdf

Oregon Dept. of Agriculture
https://www.oda.direct/EAB
Oregon Dept. of Forestry
https://www.oregon.gov/odf/forestbenefits/pages/foresthealth.aspx

OSU Extension
https://extension.oregonstate.edu/collection/emerald-ash-borer-resources

Emerald Ash Borer Information Network, a collaborative effort by the USDA Forest Service and Michigan State University
www.emeraldashborer.info

USFS Forest Health Protection
https://www.fs.usda.gov/foresthealth/index.shtml