

Forest Heath Alert - Laurel Wilt on Sassafras

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A new forest health threat, laurel wilt, has recently been detected in states neighboring southern Illinois. This has the ability to rapidly kill sassafras trees (*Sassafras albidum*) and potentially spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Laurel wilt is a disease complex caused by the interaction of an exotic fungus (*Raffaelea lauricola*) and the exotic red-bay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). Symptoms of laurel wilt on sassafras include rapid wilting of leaves, red-brown leaves still attached to dead or dying trees and dark streaky staining in wood just under bark. If you see sassafras trees matching these symptoms, please alert the University of Illinois Extension Forestry Program at cwevans@illinois.edu or 618-695-3383.



Red-brown leaves still attached



Dark streaky staining under bark



Staining of small sassafras stem

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