



NEWS RELEASE

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Date: June 14, 2010

Release No. DFO-04-10

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Northeast pine needle browning causes widespread concern

DURHAM, N.H.—Forest health managers across the Northeast are receiving a flurry of calls from concerned citizens about white pine tree needle damage.

The apparently minor though widespread forest health condition affects trees large and small. It has shown up on pines across New York, Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire, as well as western parts of Massachusetts and Maine.

Curious and often concerned callers want to find out why some of the lower needles on nearby pines are turning brown. Their calls have kept forest health managers busy answering phones in recent days.

New Hampshire Forest Health Program Coordinator Kyle Lombard said "I've gotten more calls on this white pine problem than any other forest-damaging event in recent years. That includes the '98 ice storm."

Vermont State Forest Health Coordinator Barbara Burns said the symptoms started showing up in recent weeks following some unusually hot weather.

"This was a particularly unusual spring," she said, adding the weather affected both conifers and deciduous trees.

Depending upon the location, one or more of several possible causes might be to blame for the condition. Recent University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension samples tested positive for two fungi, white pine needlecast and brown spot needle blight.

Forest health experts do not consider this concern to be life threatening to white pine trees; the affected trees should make a full recovery within a short time.

U.S. Forest Service Forest Pathologist Margaret Miller-Weeks said "They should look better by early summer, once all of the damaged needles fall off and new ones take their place".

The Forest Service will look for signs of the condition during forest health aerial overflights this summer.

The Keene Sentinel originated this story.

On the Net: http://www.vtfpr.org/protection/documents/VTFPR_June2010PineNeedlecastUpdate.pdf

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