

# Bacterial Leaf Scorch Identified in Wisconsin

This summer, Wisconsin participated in the survey supported by the U.S. Forest Service to investigate the geographic distribution and host range of Bacterial Leaf Scorch (BLS) in north central states. Leaf and twig samples were collected from symptomatic trees throughout southern and central Wisconsin and sent to a lab in Michigan State University to perform a genetic test. Out of 13 samples in 11 sites, 2 out of the 3 bur oak samples collected from the same site in Dane County were tested positive for BLS. This is the first confirmed case of bacterial leaf scorch in Wisconsin. The tests were repeated twice in the same lab, and the positive samples will be tested in a separate lab for

confirmation. The Wisconsin DNR plans to collect more samples with similar leaf symptoms to evaluate the extent of this disease in 2009.

BLS is caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*. Hosts include oak, maple, elm, ash, and other deciduous trees. The pathogen lives in the xylem vessels of host plants. Infected leaves exhibit scorch symptoms with irregular margins. The pathogen is transmitted by xylem-feeding insects, such as leafhoppers and treehoppers. The disease has been found throughout the east, southeast, and some midwest states.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/resources/Insider/20090109.htm#item7>