

## Hello Rutland Neighbors:

Spring brings more news and happenings in the Town. Here are some events you'll want to put on your calendar:



- The election ballot on **Tuesday, April 2** contains several referendum questions in addition to the political primaries. You can view sample ballots for your school district on the Town's website, and don't forget to vote!

- Thank you to everyone who took Rutland's **Comprehensive Planning Public Survey!** We received 240 responses, representing about 15% of the Town's voting-age population. The Comprehensive Planning Community Task Force will review preliminary survey results at their March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. All community members are invited to the **Comprehensive Plan Open House** at the **Town Hall** on **Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> from 3-6PM**. We'll share results from the survey, explain how public input will shape the plan, and enjoy informal discussion on key issues facing the Town. Please join us for this opportunity to share your thoughts on how things are shaping up so far! For up-to-date information on the planning process, visit [rutland-comp-plan-carpc.hub.arcgis.com](http://rutland-comp-plan-carpc.hub.arcgis.com).

- The Old Stone Mothers Club is planning a **road cleanup on Sat., April 13 at 9am**, starting on A in the vicinity of the Collection Center. If you'd like to join, they are meeting at the Flower Factory to pick up supplies. Feel free to join or do your own road with your neighbors – since we're having an early spring it will be a good time to spruce up our roadsides.



- **The Town's Annual Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 at the Town Hall.** This is the one meeting in which Electors (Town residents at least 18 years old) are allowed to vote on certain limited issues, such as setting the pay for Town officials or authorizing the Town to buy land. You can also bring up items that you would like the Board to consider. This meeting will be in person only. For more details please see the [Annual Meeting Fact Sheet](#) on the Town website under the "Community" tab.

- Following the example of other Wisconsin towns, the Board has been considering making the positions of Town Clerk and Treasurer *appointed* positions rather than *elected* ones. **This item will be on the April 2 ballot** for residents to decide. This would give the Town greater flexibility in hiring, and is supported by both our current Clerk, Dawn George, and current Treasurer, Kim Sime. I will let them explain why they recommend this option:

*"I have been the Clerk for the Town of Rutland since 1983. At that time, the skills needed were being able to type and run a calculator. (I was very excited when the Town purchased an electric typewriter). With the technological advances today, more time, skills and responsibilities are expected and required. I believe that the option of appointment versus election for the Clerk*

*position is in the best interests of the Town. With the Board appointing the clerk and treasurer positions, they can evaluate the experience that candidates would bring to the position. My current term will expire in April of 2025. If the position became appointed, I would then apply and interview with the Board to continue as Clerk. Please know that I would like to continue, so that I can share my knowledge of the day-to-day operations. This will be on the April 2, 2024 ballot and your vote matters. Please consider voting in favor of making the Town Clerk an appointed position vs an elected position. My opinion is the same for the Treasurer position. I believe this will be beneficial for the Town."*

**-Dawn George**

*"I have been the Treasurer for the Town of Rutland since 2007. The Treasurer before me had the position for 23ish years. Longevity is a good thing with the training and responsibility of officer positions. The days of a resident being voted in to "put in a little time" are gone. More time and responsibilities are expected. I believe that the option of appointing versus electing for the Treasurer position is in the best interest for Rutland. With the Board appointing, they can see the experience and such this person would bring to the position. I feel that is a very important decision. My current term will expire in April of 2025. I would then have to apply and interview with the Board to continue on as Rutland Treasurer. Uhm, I wonder if I have the experience they are looking for? ( A little humor for your day.) Please consider the option of appointing the Town Treasurer vs electing. My opinion is the same for the Clerk position. Again, the option of appointing over electing is in the best interest for the Town of Rutland."*

**-Kim Sime**

- Rutland Township will be looking for a deputy Clerk to assist Dawn George in the months and years to come. This position will be appointed. Dawn George and the Town Board are currently putting together a job description and employee policy.

- **Have you thought about being part of local governance, giving back to your community, and getting to know your neighbors and neighborhood?**

This spring, the Town's Planning Commission will have 2 terms coming up for either reappointment of current members or the appointment of new members. We are also considering increasing the total number of people on the Commission. We are now accepting letters of interest from Rutland residents who would like to be part of this important advisory group. The appointments turn over on April 15. We have created a list of questions and all candidates will go through the same interview process for these positions. The Planning Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on matters of zoning, permits, and land use. The members meet once a month (in person or Zoom) and are expected to review application materials, familiarize themselves with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, know how to apply the Comprehensive Plan to the decision making process, and sometimes do site visits. Training is offered by the Wisconsin Towns Association. Compensation is \$35 per meeting. Please send your letter of interest to [chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us](mailto:chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us).



- **The Town Hall-Garage Building Committee** has finalized the contract with National Construction and the architect, Dimension IV, and has received approval for our loan application to the Bureau of the Commissioner of Public Lands, the State Trust funds. We have started the planning process to confirm the original design and layout. The electrical service

and equipment has been ordered as it has the longest lead time for any part of the building. Next we'll begin working on the detailed design and creation of bid packages for each part of the building components. We hope to have much of this completed in the March/April time frame. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Mark Porter at [supervisorporter@town.rutland.wi.us](mailto:supervisorporter@town.rutland.wi.us)

- You may have noticed a recent **road-safety improvement** at a poor-visibility intersection in the town: **the intersection of Old Stone Road and Lake Kegonsa Road is now a 4-way stop**. This was approved in January and installed by our Road Patrolmen.

### **This early, warm spring brings up some issues about our surroundings:**



- This is a good time to learn about **Spongy Moths** and **Oak Wilt**, both of which do enormous damage to oak trees. The attached fliers explain how to spot the insects and the signs of oak wilt, and what you can do to preserve the oak trees that help make Rutland so beautiful. These [flyers](#) are also on the Town website under the "Community" tab.



- The warm, dry weather means that **burning in our area may be prohibited earlier than usual**. Please check the DNR's Fire Danger page (<https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/wisburn/-/FireDanger>) and read our Town's full Burn Ordinance on the Town's website under the "Government" tab.



- **What does your homeowners policy cover?**

After the recent storm damage to our neighbors around Evansville, some individuals are having a difficult time collecting their insurance. Many residents are finding that their home was covered but not their outbuildings. You may want to check with your homeowner's policy to make sure you have the insurance coverage you need.

- **Road Grants - Farmers, we need your help.**

There are a number of road grants the Town may be eligible for. The **ARIP** (Agricultural Roads Improvement Program) is for roads that have weight restrictions. Part of the grant application requires statements from farmers who would normally use a road but can't during certain times of the year because of these restrictions. The application is asking how these weight restrictions hamper your use of the road and what it might cost your farm operation because you can't use it. If Rutland can get one or two roads to qualify, the grant will pay for 90% of the construction. Please reach out to me if your farm operation is hampered by these weight restrictions. [chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us](mailto:chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us)



- **Reminder: New Collection Center Hours**

Every Saturday 8:00 to 4

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of each month:

November through March from 5 – 7pm and April through October 3-7:00 pm.

Please sign up for news and updates at <https://town.rutland.wi.us/subscribe-to-updates/>, and help spread the word by encouraging a few of your neighbors to sign up as well. A well-informed community helps your Town Board to work efficiently and positively toward our shared goals.



Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the Chair.

**Thank you.**

Kent Knutson, Chair, Town of Rutland.

[chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us](mailto:chairknutson@town.rutland.wi.us)

Office hours at the Town Hall, Mondays and Tuesdays 6:30 – 9am for drop-in and Mondays 4 – 6:30pm **by appointment.**



# Spongy Moth

## FOREST HEALTH FACT SHEET

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Forest Health Program, May 2023

**S**pongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) was brought to Massachusetts from Europe in the 1800s. The insect became established in eastern Wisconsin in the late 1980s and has since spread across most of the state.

Spongy moth feeds on many tree and shrub species, preferring oak, aspen, birch, crabapple, willow, tamarack and basswood (linden). Populations periodically become very high when weather conditions are favorable for the insect.

During these “outbreaks,” caterpillars can defoliate numerous tree and shrub species, create a tremendous nuisance, and cause skin rashes and other irritation. Heavily defoliated trees (more than 50 percent of leaf area) are weakened and at increased risk of decline and mortality. Other insects and diseases may attack the weakened trees.

Oak trees growing on lawns are particularly susceptible to heavy defoliation. Mice and shrews are discouraged from hunting for larvae and pupae in these areas, as they have no protective cover from cats, owls or hawks.

### Life Stages

Eggs hatch between mid-April and mid-May. As the caterpillars grow, pairs of blue and red spots appear down their backs (see title photo).



*Female adults laying egg masses.*

Most feeding damage is done by the large caterpillars in June and July. Spongy moth caterpillars do not make a silk web or tent in trees.

Mature caterpillars reach 1.5 to 2 inches in size, then pupate. Within the pupal shell, the caterpillar’s body transforms into an adult moth. Pupae are present from late June to August.

The female moths are white and cannot fly even though they have wings. The males are brown and fly erratically during the daytime in July and August. The adults only live long enough to reproduce.

In July and August, the female moth lays all her eggs in one “egg mass.” Each egg mass contains hundreds of eggs and is about the size of a nickel or quarter. The female moth covers

the eggs with insulating hair from her body, giving the egg mass a tan-colored, furry appearance.

During an outbreak, it is common to see large changes in egg mass numbers from one year to the next. An egg mass survey conducted in the fall or winter is the best predictor of the following summer’s outbreak intensity.



*Caterpillars cluster below a sticky barrier band.*

### Managing Caterpillars

**Barrier Bands:** A sticky barrier will trap or deter caterpillars as they crawl up into trees. Bands should be prepared before egg hatch begins.

Wrap a band of duct tape completely around the tree and push it into bark crevices, sticky side down. Cover the tape with a sticky pest barrier found at many retailers.

Don’t apply the sticky material directly to the tree or use motor oil or similar products. The barrier band should be replaced if it becomes coated with caterpillars or dust. It

should be taken down in August or when preparing a burlap collection band.

**Collection Bands:** Burlap bands are used to collect older, larger caterpillars. In June and July, many caterpillars crawl down the tree trunk to hide from predators. Caterpillars will hide under the burlap and can be easily destroyed.



*Burlap collection band.*

Wrap a 12- to 24-inch burlap band around the tree at chest height. Tie a string around the middle and fold the top half of the burlap over the lower half, forming a two-tiered skirt.

Check the bands daily while caterpillars are present. Use a stick or knife to brush them into a bucket of soapy water to kill them. Don't touch them, as their hairs can cause a rash. Dead caterpillars can go into the trash.

Pupae and female moths can be brushed into soapy water or crushed. Avoid touching female moths with fingers.

**Insecticides:** Insecticide application may be suitable for protecting high-value trees. These are applied as a spray, soil treatment or injection. Treatments are usually done when caterpillars are small. There is an unknown risk of introducing "oak wilt" through unsealed trunk injection sites on oak trees.

An aerial spray is an option for larger areas of high-value trees found in residential areas, campgrounds and parks. Aerial sprays are usually not economically practical in woodlots.

## Destroying Egg Masses

Oiling or removing egg masses is the most effective physical method of reducing the population. Starting in August, examine trees, buildings and outdoor objects.

Masses are often found in hidden spots, such as behind signs, inside birdhouses and beneath loose bark. Old masses appear faded, feel soft and do not contain viable eggs. Remove new masses that are safely within reach.



*Scraping an egg mass into soapy water.*

Egg masses can be scraped into a can or bucket of soapy water. After soaking for a few days, they can be discarded in the trash. Egg mass pieces that fall on the ground or remain unscraped should be picked up as they may be insulated by snow cover and are likely to hatch in spring.

Alternatively, egg masses can be covered with a horticultural oil formulated to penetrate the egg mass and suffocate the eggs.

## Reduce Damage

A healthy tree should withstand one or two years of heavy defoliation and produce a new set of leaves within a few weeks. Multiple forms of tree stress simultaneously (e.g., heavy defoliation, drought or physical damage) will often kill a tree.

Watering yard trees once a week during dry periods will reduce tree

stress and aid recovery from heavy defoliation.

Increasing tree diversity in forests and yards dominated by oak will help to reduce the damage done by spongy moth and other pests.

Periodic thinning in woodlots can promote tree health and vigorous growth. Thinning may need to be delayed because of a spongy moth outbreak. Consult an arborist or forester about managing yard and woodlot trees.

## Don't Move Spongy Moth

Spongy moth often moves long distances by hitchhiking on outdoor articles such as firewood, campers, vehicles and outdoor furniture. Inspect outdoor items. Remove egg masses and other life stages before moving the articles. Obtain firewood near where it will be burned and follow firewood regulations.

A regulatory quarantine is in place in many Wisconsin counties. Items that could move spongy moth are not allowed out of the quarantine area unless inspected for life stages. These regulations help to slow pest spread.

## Additional Resources

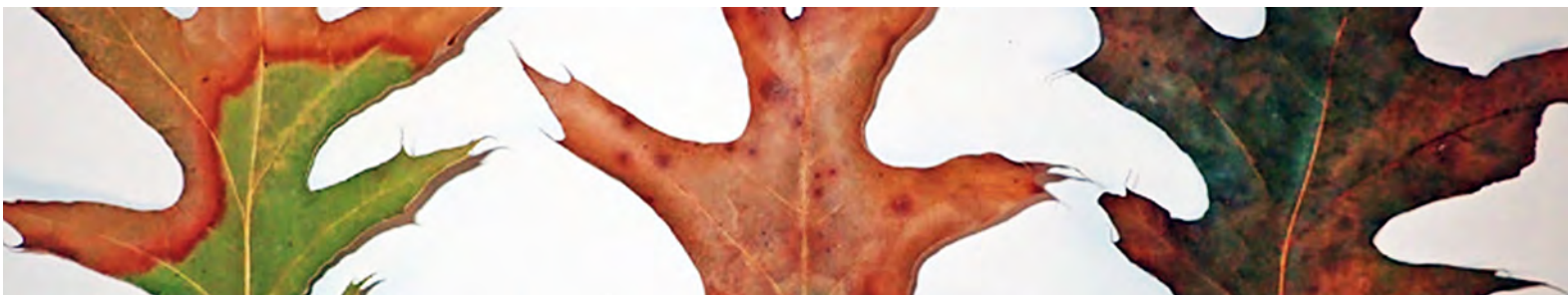
Visit [spongymoth.wi.gov](https://spongymoth.wi.gov) and the [DNR spongy moth webpage](#).



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All photos and graphics: Wisconsin DNR  
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# Oak Wilt In Wisconsin's Forests

## Biology, Symptoms And Management

### FOREST HEALTH FACT SHEET

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Forest Health Program, June 2023

#### Locations

Oak wilt is a deadly disease that affects oak trees. First documented in 1944, oak wilt has since been confirmed in most of Wisconsin's counties (Figure 1).

Oak wilt is widespread and common throughout central and southern Wisconsin; however, the disease remains uncommon in northern Wisconsin (Figure 2).

#### Impact

Oak wilt kills thousands of trees each year in forests, woodlots and urban areas. Oak wilt can even attack and kill healthy trees.

The disease is a particularly serious problem for species in the red oak group such as northern red, northern pin and black oak. Once wilting systems become apparent on a red oak, the infected tree will lose most of its leaves and die within approximately one month.

Among the white oak group, bur and swamp white oaks demonstrate moderate tolerance to the disease, living several years after symptoms first appear. White oaks experience even slower progression of the disease and may live many years with infection.

#### Biology

Oak wilt is caused by the fungus

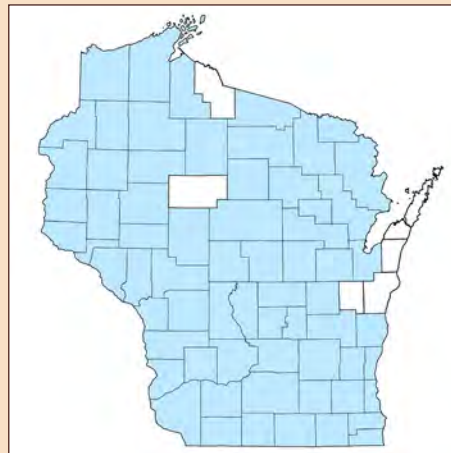


Figure 1: County distribution of oak wilt in Wisconsin.

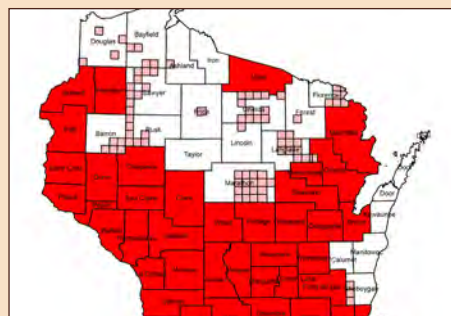
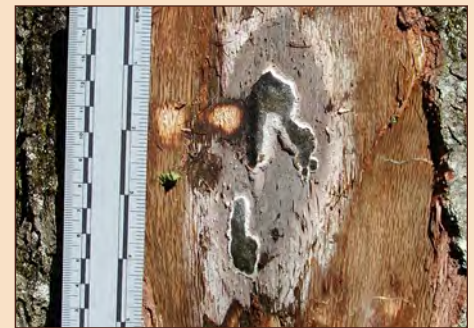


Figure 2: Known distribution of oak wilt in northern Wisconsin. Pink squares mark townships of 36 square miles where oak wilt is present in part. In red counties, oak wilt is common and widespread.

*Bretziella fagacearum*. The fungus grows through the infected tree's water conducting system, causing the tree to wilt and die.

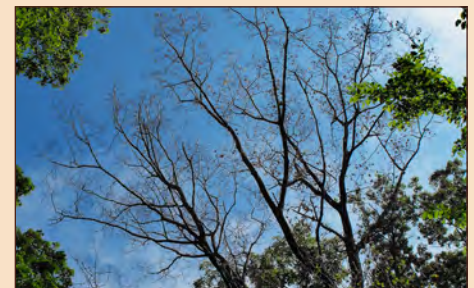
Oak wilt is introduced to an area by sap-feeding beetles that carry oak wilt spores to fresh tree wounds.



Fungal mats produce oak wilt spores and grow underneath the bark of trees killed by the disease.

Spore-bearing fungal mats develop under the bark in the fall or spring following the death of the infected tree. The sap-feeding beetles are attracted to the fungal mat and can transport oak wilt spores to fresh wounds or to recently cut oak stumps.

Once in an area, the disease can spread to nearby oak trees through interconnected (grafted) root systems, creating an expanding pocket of dead oak trees.



Leaves of infected trees will wilt and drop to the ground in summer.

## Identification

Leaves will wilt and drop from the upper canopy first. Symptoms progress down the tree rapidly.

Wilting symptoms are observed from June through September, most commonly in July and August. Leaves of infected trees turn dull green or bronze and look water-soaked.



*Leaves of trees infected with oak wilt turn dull green or bronze and look water-soaked.*

Unlike normal leaf fall, the leaves of infected trees drop to the ground when they are still partially green.

The symptoms of oak are similar to those of other pest, disease and abiotic issues. A symptomatic tree should be sampled and examined by a laboratory for proper diagnosis, especially if active management is being considered.

## Prevention

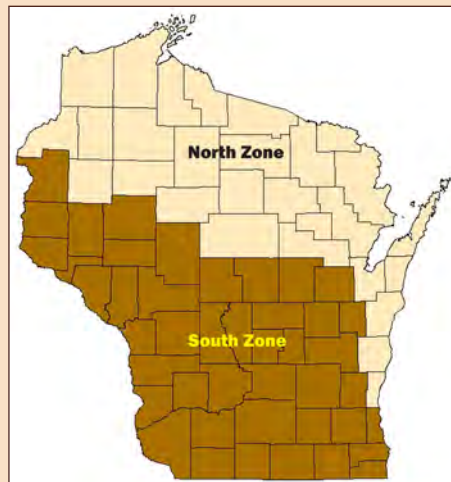
Once the disease exists in a stand, it is difficult to control. **Prevention of this disease is the best approach.** The greatest risk of oak wilt transmission occurs in the spring and early summer, when oak wilt-carrying beetles are abundant and fungal mats are fresh.

To help reduce risk, the DNR has developed a separate [Oak Wilt Management factsheet](#) and [Oak Harvesting Guidelines To Reduce The Introduction And Spread Of Oak Wilt](#). The publications recommend harvesting only during the non-restricted period if your stand is in a county that has oak wilt or is within six miles of a county with oak wilt (*Figure 1, previous page*).

Harvesting-restricted periods are

dependent on your location in the state (Figure 3):

- North Zone: April 15 to July 15.
- South Zone: April 1 to July 15.



**Figure 3:** Map of counties in the north and south Harvesting Restriction Zones.

**Note:** The guidelines include Exceptions and Modifications that allow for stand-level flexibilities. Please read the guidelines for more information at the DNR's [oak wilt webpage](#).

If oak trees need to be pruned during the harvesting restricted periods, apply wound sealer immediately after the wound is made to prevent the introduction of spores by sap-feeding beetles.

## Management

Although management to control the below-ground spread of oak wilt can be complicated and costly, active management can be successful. Controlling below-ground spread requires disrupting the movement of the fungus through root grafts from infected trees to healthy trees.

Physical severing of the root system using a vibratory plow or trencher has proven to be effective if plow lines are placed correctly. Recently, field trials have shown some promising results to contain the below-ground spread of oak wilt by using herbicides on healthy oaks, or uprooting the entire root mass of healthy oaks that border the infected pocket.

Trees that have died of oak wilt will

harbor spores for approximately one year after death. Once root grafts have been disrupted, dead and live trees inside a pocket should be harvested to limit the spread of the disease by beetles.

If you are interested in options for active management of oak wilt, please contact your local [DNR forester](#) or [DNR forest health specialist](#).



*Keep firewood local.*

## Firewood

Moving infected firewood can spread oak wilt long distances to a previously disease-free area. Keep firewood local and consider covering it with 4-mil plastic until the bark is loose. Wood from dead trees with loose bark, and from apparently healthy trees with no wilting symptoms, does not pose a risk for the spread of oak wilt.

Wisconsin has developed requirements pertaining to the movement of firewood. For more information about firewood restrictions, please visit the DNR's [Firewood Rules and Resources webpage](#).



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