

LAUREL WILT DISEASE

AN IMPORTANT THREAT TO CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

A STAKEHOLDER MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2009, 1:00 TO 3:00 PM, SOUTH COAST WINERY, 34843 RANCHO CALIFORNIA RD, TEMECULA, CA 92591

- ★ In 2002, a species of ambrosia beetle new to the U.S. was discovered in a monitoring trap near Savannah, Georgia.
- ★ By late 2003, widespread collapse of red bay, *Persea bobonia*, trees in coastal forests of Georgia and South Carolina was observed. The cause was a fungus carried by the ambrosia beetle, *Xyleborus glabratus*, a native to humid Southeast Asia. The previously undescribed fungus in the genus *Raffaelea* is a symbiont of the ambrosia beetle.
- ★ The disease is fatal to other members of the Lauraceae family, including California bay laurel and avocado, and has since spread rapidly in Georgia, South Carolina and Florida killing millions of native red bay, pondberry, pondspice and sassafras trees in its path.
- ★ The disease is causing permanent disruption of ecosystems and almost certain extinction of species on the coastal plain of the southeastern seaboard.
- ★ In north Florida, backyard avocado trees, *Persea americana*, are now succumbing to laurel wilt disease, putting the entire Florida avocado industry at serious risk.
- ★ Red bay is a popular firewood amongst barbecue enthusiasts and there is now an abundant source. Firewood along with nursery specimens in the Lauraceae family like camphor, could potentially be the vehicle on which this pest/ disease complex finds its way into California.
- ★ Learn first hand about this threat from visiting Florida researchers who are working on the front lines of the disease's spread. Discuss actions we may take as a stakeholder group to prevent introduction of ambrosia beetle and potential damage to native ecosystems and agriculture.
- ★ Find out the risks this threat poses and actions environmental groups, regulators, the avocado industry and local landscape industry may consider.



Speakers:

Dr. Randy Ploetz (Plant Pathologist, University of Florida)
Dr. Jonathan Crane (Extension Horticulturist, University of Florida)
Dr. Jorge Pena (Entomologist, University of Florida)
Dr. Joseph Morse (Entomologist, University of California Riverside)

Sponsors:

California Avocado Commission,
University of California Cooperative Extension



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