

Forest Pest First Detector Course Syllabus: You Can Help Protect Our Trees and Forests!

The Forest Pest First Detectors (FPFD) program trains people how to identify and slow the spread of some of the introduced forest pests of greatest concern for Vermont. This year we are offering the course just for graduates of UVM's Master Gardener program. If you are a graduate of the UVM Extension Master Gardener program and you are interested in protecting Vermont's trees and forests, this free, on-line 7- week training is for you!

Course Components:

- **Topics Covered:** Introduction to invasive forest pests; beech leaf disease; hemlock woolly adelgid and elongate hemlock scale; spotted lanternfly and tree-of-heaven; jumping worms; oak wilt; European cherry fruit fly; box tree moth; emerald ash borer; Asian longhorned beetle; Gardening as a vector; and Volunteering: putting knowledge into action.
- **Ten Sections** containing videos, articles, podcasts, self-assessment activities (quizzes), discussion questions, and additional optional "deeper dive" resources for people who want more information.
- **Four Live Webinars** on Zoom, recorded for those who cannot attend live.

Option of two tracks:

- **Track 1** is for people interested in volunteering as a Forest Pest First Detector (FPFD). FPFD volunteer hours can be used for Master Gardener hours. You will be expected to:
 - Complete all self-assessment activities (short quizzes)
 - Attend live webinars.
 - Introduce yourself and make at least 5 additional discussion entries.
 - Sign-up for a volunteer activity at end of course that can be used for MG hours.
 - Participants will receive a Certificate of Completion.
- **Track 2** is for people taking the course for their own education and not intending to volunteer.
 - All materials and self-assessment activities are optional.
 - Do at your own pace.
 - No expectation of volunteering
 - No certificate of completion

There are no credits offered for this free course for either track. Let the course coordinator know if you need to switch tracks part-way through the course. Everyone who completes the course will receive the Forest Pest First Detector semi-monthly ebulletin with introduced tree and forest pest-related news and volunteer opportunities.

Volunteering as a FPFD

Volunteering as a Forest Pest First Detector offers a chance to actively engage in educating others and monitoring for pests. You will have the chance at the end of the course to indicate your interest in different types of volunteer activities. *You are responsible for keeping track of*

your volunteer hours. The only documentation required is that you take a photo and send a brief one sentence description of your activity. There is no minimum requirement for volunteer hours.

FPFD activities tend to fall into the categories of outreach and education; pest monitoring; and management planning. Below are examples of some of the things FPDFs do. We can support you in designing other activities that meet your skills and interests.

- Giving talks (we provide PowerPoint, script, and handouts)
- Posting literature
- Sharing posts on social media
- Leading ash tree walks
- Staffing tables at events in your community (farmers market, etc.)
- Staffing booths at large events (VT Flower Show; State Fair, etc.)
- Monitoring for specific pests such as hemlock woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer, or tree-of-heaven
- Organize an ash tree tagging event.
- Help with ash tree inventories or developing ash management plans.

Course Platform and Requirement

The course is offered online through campus.extension.org. The same online platform that has hosted the UVM Extension Master Gardener course for the last few years. Because this is an on-line course, you will need access to the internet and the ability to participate in webinars over Zoom (if you have limited bandwidth, you can leave your camera off during the Zoom).

Time Commitment

The course is composed of 10 sections over 7 weeks, from **March 10th to April 27th**. Each section covers two to four topics or pests. **You can expect to spend between 6 to 10 hours per week on the material**, more if you choose to explore all the optional “Deeper Dive” materials. Participants will continue to have access to the course materials after the course has ended and until the end of the year.

Important Dates

- March 2: Registration closes
- March 3: Receive instructions for accessing course.
- March 10: Course starts.
- March 12: Live webinar: 7:00 – 8:30
- March 19: Live webinar: 7:00 – 8:00
- April 9: Live webinar: 7:00 – 8:00
- April 16: Live webinar: 7:00 – 8:30
- April 27: Course ends, all materials due for Track 1 participants

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to

Understand

- Threats from major introduced invasive insects and diseases to Vermont's forest health.
- How to identify signs and symptoms of important pests such as emerald ash borer and spotted lanternfly.

Report

- Use VTinvasives.org for information and reporting.

Take Action

- Monitor the places you love for forest pests.
- Join volunteer efforts to slow the spread of forest pests.
- Share your knowledge with others to increase the chance of early detection.

Coordinator, Contact Information and Communication

The course is moderated by Ginger Nickerson, UVM Extension Forest Pest Education Coordinator. You can reach me throughout the course by email at: ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu, or by phone at: (802)-656-4831. You can also reach out to me anytime through direct messaging on the course site. To do so, click on the message block, and find and click on Ginger's name and select "message" (this is a private message sent just to me).

Pre-Course & Post-Course Assessment. All students are asked to complete a survey at the beginning of the course as well as at the end. This information is used to help us improve the design of the course and report on the impact of the course to our funders.

Live Webinars - Please note on your calendars (full descriptions below):

There will be four live webinars. These will be recorded for people who cannot attend, but folks in Track 1 are encouraged to attend in real time as much as possible. **The first and last webinar will run from 7:00 – 8:30**, the middle two will run from 7:00 – 8:00.

- **March 12: 7:00 – 8:30:** The Future of Beech Trees and Course Introduction
- **March 19: 7:00 – 8:00:** Spotted Lanternfly and Tree-of-Heaven: Lessons from Massachusetts
- **April 9: 7:00 – 9:00:** Best Practices to Keep Introduced Pests Out of Gardens
- **April 16: 7:00 – 8:30:** Putting Knowledge into Action

All live webinars can be accessed via the Zoom link or phone number below. You must use the password to get into the webinar.

An email reminder will be sent before each session. Recordings will be sent out after every live webinar.

- Zoom Webinar Link: [Join here](#)
- Meeting ID: 872 5390 5168
- Passcode: 120095
- Phone access: To call in by phone, find your local number [here](#)

Test Zoom access at <https://zoom.us/test>. For help, contact Ginger: Ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu or call (802) 505-8189.

The webinars will be recorded. Students who participate with their camera on or who use a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do

not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the chat feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.

Self-Assessment Activities

Most sections have an “Activity” in at the end. These are essentially short quizzes. The answers are provided in a separate document. This is your opportunity to assess your learning. They are not graded, and you can take them as many times as you like. Most of these are fillable pdfs.

*****To save your answers you must download the document to your computer first before filling it out and then save it with a new name.**

Discussion Sections

One of the intents of the course is to build community and one of the most interesting aspects is learning from one another. This is a wonderful group with lots of knowledge, experience, and shared interests! The discussion section can be the best part of the course. Everyone is encouraged to use the discussion section to introduce yourself, post questions, share ideas and information. Track 1 participants should at a minimum introduce yourselves and make at least 5 discussion entries. I will be checking and commenting on the discussion section every weekday.

DESCRIPTION OF LIVE WEBINARS AND INSTRUCTORS

March 12: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

The Future of Beech Trees & Course Introduction

Description: Beech trees have many challenges, and the latest appears to be the greatest of all: beech leaf disease. Join us for this informative kick-off webinar on beech trees, their challenges, and treatment options for beech leaf disease. From 8:00 to 8:30 we will do an introduction to the course and to one another.

Speaker: Beth Brantley is a Research Scientist with Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, conducting research in arboriculture and providing diagnostic support and public engagement through outreach and presentations. Her background and interests include plant pathology, forestry, silviculture, and tree risk assessment. She works with Bartlett Tree Expert offices in the northeastern United States, from Maine to New Jersey, and is based in New Hampshire. She is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, an SAF Certified Forester and an ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification instructor, and a former Master Gardener!

March 19, 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Spotted Lanternfly and Tree-of-Heaven: Lessons from Massachusetts

Description: Vermont has no confirmed infestations of spotted lanternfly yet, but it is established in nearby Massachusetts and could easily become established here. Join Dr.

Elizabeth Barnes to learn about Massachusetts' experience with this agricultural and nuisance pest and its preferred host, Tree-of-Heaven, how these pests might enter Vermont, where to look for them, and other important points to share with the public.

Speaker: Elizabeth Barnes is the Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and previously worked as the Exotic Forest Pest Educator at Purdue University. She received her Doctorate in plant-insect interactions from the University of Denver, where she studied tent caterpillars and fall webworms. In her spare time, Elizabeth is an avid caterpillar watcher and is always happy to answer questions about all things insect related.

April 9th 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Best Practices to Keep Introduced Pests Out of Gardens

Description: Plant sales, nurseries, landscapers, and tools can all be means of introducing and spreading introduced and invasive forest pests. In this webinar, Ben Dillner of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (Plant Health Section) will share tips and best management practices for gardeners to help reduce the spread of forest pests.

Speaker: Ben Dillner is the State Pest Survey Coordinator for Vermont. He coordinates Vermont's Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey and conducts community outreach activities for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. He also leads inspections of nurseries around the state and assists with efforts to manage introduced weed species.

April 16, 7 – 8:30 pm

Putting Knowledge into Action!

Description: Come with your questions and ideas as we explore how to apply what you learned in the course! A panel of enthusiastic and creative Forest Pest First Detectors will share what they have done in their communities to educate others about forest pests. Deb Heleba and Ginger Nickerson will explain how you can use your Forest Pest First Detector activities for Master Gardener hours.

Speakers: Deb Heleba is the Statewide Outreach and Education Program Manager for UVM Extension Community Horticulture Programs. Sue Lovering is a FPDF and garden designer based in Johnson and the founder of the Regional Invasive Insect Preparedness Team (RIIPT) for Lamoille and Franklin Counties; Andrea Landsberg is both a Master Gardener and a FPDF. She is currently monitoring lingering ash in Addison County; and Judy Wiger-Grohs is a long-time FPDF volunteer and Middlebury Tree Committee member in Addison County.