



Department of Bioagricultural  
Sciences and Pest Management  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1177

July 26, 2010

**RE: Walnut twig beetle and *Geosmithia* sp. nov. found in Tennessee**

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to inform you that a black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) sample collected by Dr. Scott Schlarbaum, University of Tennessee, and suspected of having thousand cankers disease (TCD), was shipped to me at Colorado State University on July 20, 2010 and arrived July 22<sup>nd</sup>. I have a federal 'unknown' permit and a federal permit to receive samples containing *Geosmithia* within the continental United States. The Tennessee sample sent to me contained one adult male beetle that was verified as *Pityophthorus juglandis* by Drs. Whitney Cranshaw, Boris Kondratieff and Don Bright. Isolations were attempted from the cankers surrounding the beetle galleries in the branch samples and *Geosmithia* sp nov. was isolated. The fungus was identified based on morphological features by me.

This is a significant discovery because it is the first report of the walnut twig beetle and *Geosmithia* sp. nov. in the native range of *J. nigra*. TCD has killed thousands of walnut trees in the western United States and could potentially be devastating in the eastern United States as well. The extent of outbreak in the Knoxville area is unknown to me, but Dr. Schlarbaum indicated the affected trees are in an urban area. Judging from the images accompanying the sample, the disease has been present in the region for a number of years and is causing mortality.

Based on our experience here in Colorado TCD will be difficult, if not impossible, to stop. Our hope is that the beetle and disease will behave differently in the East. I believe that there are probably other outbreaks in the East that have not yet been noticed, and I would urge foresters and diagnosticians to be on the lookout for unusual dieback or mortality of walnuts, especially in urban areas. That is where TCD is likely to occur first because of movement of the beetle in wood (firewood, fresh lumber).

Since the USDA has no federal quarantine on TCD, and to my knowledge this disease is not on any action lists, I will assume unless otherwise notified, that information concerning this outbreak in Tennessee can become public knowledge immediately. Perhaps the state regulatory agencies will be more proactive in dealing with TCD than USDA-APHIS. My colleague, Dr. Whitney Cranshaw will be giving a lecture on TCD at the International Society of Arboriculture meeting tomorrow, July 27, 2010, and will disclose the new outbreak at that time unless specifically requested not to do so. I will be lecturing to the NPDN diagnosticians on Thursday and will similarly discuss the new outbreak.

If there is any way Dr. Cranshaw or I can help with training, sharing our experiences with TCD, etc., please let us know. We are hoping to visit the Knoxville area on August 10.

Ned Tisserat

Extension Specialist and Professor of Plant Pathology