Laurel wilt is a fungal disease caused by the invasive pathogen Raffaelea lauricola. It is transmitted by the wood-boring redbay ambrosia beetle. In Kentucky, sassafras is likely to be the species most affected by laurel wilt although the fungus can also cause disease on spicebush. Be on the lookout for sassafras trees that have died suddenly, have dead red-brown leaves still attached, and have dark streaky staining in wood just under their bark.

Learn more: forestry.ca.uky.edu/laurel-wilt