



News Release

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CHECK NOW FOR DESTRUCTIVE TREE PESTS

Winter is the best time to seek out one of Georgia's worst pests, according to the Georgia Forestry Commission. North Georgia residents are urged to check their hemlock trees now for signs of an exotic insect known as the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). In cold months, HWAs have a white, wool-like covering and can be found nestled between hemlock needles.

"Hemlock woolly adelgids have the potential to wipe out our beautiful hemlock forests," said Scott Griffin, Georgia Forestry Commission Forest Health Specialist. "The insects have been found in ten north Georgia counties, and tree death can occur in as few as three years of infestation." According to Griffin, areas impacted by HWA include Rabun, Habersham, Stephens, Towns, Union, White, Fannin, Gilmer, Lumpkin and Dawson Counties.

"If you find adelgids on your trees, some type of treatment will be needed to save them," said Griffin. The GFC recommends systemic insecticides that contain the active ingredients imidacloprid or dinotefuran for soil treatments. Griffin said a low concentration imidacloprid is sold at most home and garden stores and is practical for homeowners with fewer than three trees that need treatment. Higher concentrated products purchased from pesticide companies would be more cost effective for people with higher numbers of infested trees. One application fights off adelgids for approximately two years, according to Griffin.

"A special tool is needed to inject imidacloprid into the ground," said Griffin. "The Georgia Forestry Commission loans out these tools and is available to help residents identify the insects and treat affected hemlocks."

Detailed information regarding hemlock woolly adelgids and other invasive species is available on the Georgia Forestry Commission website at www.gatrees.org.

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