

# Hemlock Horror!

Deep in the Hemlock forests of Northeast United States, lurks a creature so horrible, that people faint in fear on sight. It is a murderer of trees, a void of destruction, a soulless being out to consume the life of the conifers. It is... THE HEMLOCK HORROR!

The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is an invasive pest hailing from Asia and western North America that has recently been found to be infecting hemlock trees of eastern North America. Hemlocks themselves are a vital ecological factor, they provide habitats for wildlife species, help prevent erosion on steep banks, and are one of the most common species homeowners plant on their property due to its aesthetic appeal. However, HWA (Hemlock Woolly Adelgid) has infested nearly one-half of all hemlocks in the native eastern range and continuous to spread. This small, oval shaped brown bug feeds on the sap produced from the trees, sometimes injecting a toxin as well. This toxin causes the tree to lose needles, and will not produce new growth, making the tree look grayish-green rather than a healthy dark green.

The USDA Forest Service has in place a plan to help eradicate the species from the hemlock trees, but work is going slow due to the number one prevention being a predator beetle that will kill the HWA. The beetle, *Laricobius nigrinus* has been establish in 13 states and redistributed to the now infested east forests. Other prevention methods include resistant Hemlock genotypes, other predatory bugs, and systemic insecticides.

What can I do about this? What if I see HWA? There are a few things you can do if you come across this threat.

- 1) Contact the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) near you and report the HWA threat.
- 2) Use the predatory beetles! They are the best biological control out there, and will not damage your tree.
- 3) Treat your trees! You can purchase a foliar or systemic spray and focus on covering the soil at the base of the tree. Make sure to follow all directions, and do not use sprays if the tree is near a water source such as a river or stream. If it is, follow option 3.
- 4) Remove the tree. Any branches or the entire tree should go if it is infested to eliminate spreading to other trees. If the tree is near a water source, leave the stump to help maintain bank and soil sturdiness and prevent erosion.

There are many different factions already on the case of HWA including State & Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters and the National Plant board. They are all working together to detect, eradicate, suppress and prevent the spread from continuing through research and development, management, and information transfer. Right now, it seems the fate of the hemlocks is to be salvaged by predatory beetles.

Healthy Hemlock



HWA



Invested Hemlock

