



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

PLANT PROTECTION DIVISION PEST PROGRAM

It's hard to believe that it is February already! With spring rapidly approaching, our team at WSDA is working rapidly to develop a plan to respond this year to the Asian giant hornet (AGH) introductions in our state.

While our plans are very much still in development, we wanted to give our stakeholders an overview of the work that is happening and the status of this project.

Detection

The obvious first step to eradicating AGH is finding the existing hornets. We are considering a two-fold approach to locating AGH: trapping and public reporting. We are currently researching trapping options that most effectively attract AGH while attracting as few honeybees and native pollinators as possible. In addition to traps, we are already conducting outreach to the public so that they will recognize and report sightings of AGH.

Tracking

Once individuals are found, the next step is to locate the colonies. We are researching several options to catch, tag, and release AGH worker hornets so that we can follow them back to their colony. Anticipated challenges to tracking the hornets include crossing private property and locating nests in heavily vegetated or inaccessible areas.

Eradication

Once we track a hornet back to its colony, we plan to eradicate it. Again, we are considering several options including baited food and organic or conventional insecticidal foam. We are also already considering potential environmental impacts and how to mitigate any impacts. Regardless of how eradication happens, it will involve small, isolated treatments of several square feet, not widespread spraying.

Safety

Safety of the public and our staff in the field is a primary concern, given that AGH can sting through traditional beekeeping suits and their venom is more toxic than that of other stinging insects. We have already ordered special equipment for our staff to keep them safe. We are also working with the Department of Health on public health messaging on how to treat stings and the risk that AGH poses to the general population and those who already know they are sensitive to bee or wasp stings.

Outreach

There will be significant outreach necessary for this project, not only because of the benefit of public reporting of AGH sightings but because of the need to warn anyone outdoors about AGH and the threat to human health.

Some of the outreach we have already completed includes:

- Sent [information out to beekeepers](#) in apiary registration reminders
- Issued an [AGH pest alert](#)
- Published two blogs, the first of which received national media coverage (including the New York Times) and has received nearly 20,000 views.
 - Dec 19 - [Pest Alert: Asian giant hornet](#)
 - Jan 13 - [WSDA asks beekeepers to look for and report Asian giant hornet](#)
- Paid educational promotions on Facebook and Instagram.
- Created an [AGH webpage](#) and [reporting interactive map](#).
- Numerous presentations, especially to beekeeper groups
- Created and distributed several AGH mounted samples for outreach activities throughout the state.
- Created an [AGH Watch Facebook group](#)
- Added AGH as a topic for people to sign up for email updates to WSDA's [Pest Program email distribution list](#).

We continue to plan outreach activities, with an emphasis in Whatcom County and Western Washington. Will be conducting statewide education as well and we will also depend heavily on our partners and stakeholders to effectively reach the many audiences we have identified.

Just a final reminder that all plans are tentative at this point. If you have any questions about our AGH project, please don't hesitate to contact us at pestprogram@agr.wa.gov or 1-800-443-6684.

