ASIAN GIANT HORNET STAKEHOLDER UPDATE #16 – NOVEMBER 10, 2020

- Tree removal and Asian giant hornet nest examination
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TREE REMOVAL AND ASIAN GIANT HORNET NEST EXAMINATION

On October 28 the tree holding the Asian giant hornet nest was prepped for study. The entire tree was cut down. Next, the tree was sectioned off to preserve just the cavity enclosing the nest. The interior of the tree was saturated with carbon dioxide to sedate any live hornets. Additional cling film was wrapped around the tree segment to secure it for transport. The section was moved to the Washington State University Puyallup Research and Extension Center; upon arrival the section was placed in a walk-in cooler to further immobilize any live Asian giant hornets inside the nest.

Early in the morning of Oct. 29, WSDA Pest Program staff gathered to extract the nest from the tree. The team partially removed the cellophane to fill the cavity again with carbon dioxide. They used a circular saw to cut a partial pathway on the backside of the cavity, which created a slot for a wedge to split the tree into even halves. The wedge was inserted, struck with a sledge hammer, and the tree segment split open.

Staff removed the top half of the section exposing the nest and cavity. Staff entomologists collected any immobile Asian giant hornets using chop sticks and forceps. These live hornets were transferred to a
small cooler filled with ice to keep them anesthetized. Once the adult specimens were collected it was safe for the team to examine the remainder of the nest.

The nest consisted of six comb stacked on top of one another and was 8-9 inches in diameter. The combs contained 108 white-capped cells with pupae, and 6 unhatched eggs. There were 190 larvae present, most of which had fallen out of the combs. The adult hornets comprised of 9 males, 76 queens, and 26 workers. This was in addition to the 85 previously removed from the tree with a vacuum. The radio tag that led to the nest discovery was also recovered. The dental floss holding the tag to the hornet appeared to have been chewed through, either by the tagged worker hornet, or a nest mate.
Entomologists will continue to collect and analyze data from the nest. Any completed research will be made publicly available and posted to the Asian giant hornet webpage.

- Click here to watch the virtual press conference being held November 10, 2020 at 1 p.m. Pacific.
- Click here to view the blog on the nest removal and examination.
- Click here to view the blog on the nest collection data.

NEW DETECTIONS

A few hornets were found in the area of the October 29 eradication. Three queens were found at the landowner’s home in a water bucket. One male was caught in a trap left at the tree site, additionally another male was found one road over.

STILL TRAPPING TIME FOR 2020

Although the first nest has been found, this is not the end of the story. Work continues for WSDA’s Pest Program as well as some citizen scientist trappers in Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties who are keeping their traps up until at least Thanksgiving. Citizen scientists in those counties are urged to check and change the bait when necessary. Trap collections do not need to be submitted, unless there is an Asian giant hornet. The lab is still processing collections but have identified 134,777 specimens of Vespidae so far.

There is still time to find another nest and residents are still asked to report Asian giant hornet sightings (with a photo if possible) online, via email at hornets@agr.wa.gov, or by calling 1-800-443-6684.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST TRAPPING SURVEY

The Citizen Scientist Trapping Survey is available for the 2020 season. WSDA is contacting citizen scientists to gather feedback on participation during the trapping season. Please take a few minutes to answer the survey, even in you only trapped part of the season. The responses will help improve the
citizen scientist trapping program next year. Click here to take the survey. The survey will close November 16.

USDA NEWS

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been working alongside the WSDA to help prevent the spread of Asian giant hornets. Their Agriculture Research Service (ARS) has been generating different lures to attract Asian giant hornets. The WSDA has been using the experimental bait in some of their traps. The USDA also supplied the radio tag used in the first successful tracking of an Asian giant hornet back to its nest. Visit the below articles for more information.

- USDA Lure attracts Live Asian Giant Hornets, Helps Lead to Nest Discovery
- USDA’s Cutting-Edge Methods Help Deliver a Victory Against Asian Giant Hornet

They also briefed on Asian giant hornets through radio clips. The short segments are available for listening.

- Actuality: Collaboration to Combat Asian Giant Hornet
- Advances in Asian Giant Hornet Defense

UPDATE FROM CANADA

British Columbia had one new Asian giant hornet sighting on November 2 in Abbotsford. Their information bulletin can be found here. On November 7 one was spotted in Aldergrove, the specimen will be examined on November 10. They continue to monitor carbohydrate based traps and encourage citizens to report Asian giant hornets.

STAY CONNECTED

The WSDA continues to work with the public to provide information on Asian giant hornets. During the last week of October, the WSDA Facebook posts reached 1.2 million people. Headlines have been made in national and international news. The WSDA continues to provide informational webinars to beekeeping associations, gardening clubs, libraries and museums, sovereign nations and many other stakeholders. Contact horns@agr.wa.gov, if your organization is interested in a presentation to learn more about Asian giant hornets.

- View past news releases, blogs, and Pest Program updates about Asian giant hornet.
- Join the Asian giant hornet Facebook group.
- Join the Pest Program email listserv.
- Follow WSDA on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter.