**EXPORT UPDATE**

Every fall WSDA provides licensed Christmas tree growers with a summary of shipping requirements for Christmas trees and cut greens. The summary includes information on shipping to both domestic and international destinations, and allows growers to work proactively with their inspector to prepare for their export shipments. An updated summary for 2021 has been posted to the WSDA website. Below are some key changes for 2021:

**North Carolina:** Pre-notification of each shipment of plant material is required into North Carolina as part of their quarantine for phytophagous snails, which includes Brown Garden Snail (*Cornu aspersa*). Notification should include the type and quantity of material sent and the name of the destination within North Carolina and may be a copy of the state phytosanitary certificate or an invoice with a Brown Garden Snail compliance stamp. Send pre-notification paperwork to Joy Goforth at: Joy.Goforth@ncagr.gov or fax to 919-733-1041.

**Mexico:** In November 2020, eleven new insect species were added to Mexico’s list of quarantine pests. Mexico has zero tolerance when quarantine pests are found in Christmas trees. Work closely with your WSDA inspector to meet shipping requirements. In addition to shaking, Christmas trees must be sprayed with a pyrethroid treatment 3-6 weeks prior to export.

If you have any questions about export requirements, contact your WSDA Plant Services Inspector.

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**JAPANESE BEETLE**

This summer a large infestation of Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) was discovered near Grandview in Yakima County. WSDA will be amending the existing Japanese beetle quarantine, WAC 16-470 to prevent the spread of this highly invasive pest to new areas of the state. Japanese beetle grubs and eggs can be transported in soil, but since Christmas trees are shipped without soil and roots, growers should not be impacted. If you see a Japanese beetle, report it on WSDA’s website.
Your Christmas Tree Grower License provides several benefits to you and the industry as a whole:

- Ongoing disease and postharvest research that improves your ability to grow, manage, and market top-quality Christmas trees.
- Outreach to growers about pest issues, rule changes, legislation, and research that could impact their businesses.
- Maintains the delivery of healthy, pest-free Christmas trees from your field to living rooms worldwide.
- Provides for enhanced communication between growers and WSDA/USDA in the event of a quarantine.

Get your Christmas tree grower license by February 1 each year. For more information about the license and growing Christmas trees in Washington, visit agr.wa.gov and search for “Christmas tree” in the search bar or call 360-902-1874 and ask for Cheryl Spink.

PEST ALERT

Asian giant hornet (Vespa mandarinia) is the world’s largest species of hornet. This invasive hornet has been confirmed in Washington, primarily in Whatcom County.

Although it is not typically aggressive toward humans, this unwelcome pest can inflict a powerful sting and also represents a threat to honeybees, for which they have a voracious appetite.

The invasive hornets are usually 1.5 - 2 inches in length and can be distinguished by their large orange head with prominent eyes. They have a black and orange/yellow striped abdomen, and form large colonies that typically nest in the ground, but all nests in Washington have been found in rotting alder trees.

If it becomes established, this hornet will have negative impacts on the environment, economy, and public health of Washington State.

Other states have contacted WSDA with concerns about the hornets hitchhiking in Christmas trees. The probability is low, but if you are in an area where Asian giant hornet has been found, it is recommended you shake your trees prior to shipping out of the area.

If you see an Asian giant hornet or have seen evidence of a hive attack, please report it! There are several ways to report suspected sightings in Washington State:

- Report using the Hornet Watch Report Form
- Email horns@agr.wa.gov or call 1-800-443-6684

ONLINE ENFORCEMENT OF PLANT QUARANTINES APPLYING TO CHRISTMAS PRODUCTS

In July, the WSDA Plant Services Program received a USDA grant to support effective enforcement of WSDA pest and disease quarantines on plants shipped interstate through internet sites, before they enter Washington State in violation of state regulations. Domestic internet sales and distribution of plants has largely been unregulated and is the most vulnerable point in our interstate compliance system. WSDA will close this compliance gap and decrease the potential for pest introductions into Washington by raising industry and public awareness for our 24 state plant health quarantines.

Using grant funds, we have hired an inspector whose primary focus is to provide this outreach and enforcement. Working with individual plant sale sites and with larger sales platforms such as Amazon, eBay, and Etsy, we have been able to take steps to prevent the sale of noxious weeds, plants with injurious pests, and diseases while informing online sellers about WSDA’s plant quarantines. This season, we will focus our work on Christmas trees, wreaths, and holiday cut greens shipped into Washington State.

Elongate scale, invasive moths, and the spotted lanternfly are a few of the pests we are working to keep out of Washington, but our outreach applies to all pests. Online sellers of holiday plant material will be contacted for potential violations of our quarantines and to inform them about the requirements to ship products to Washington State. If you have any questions about our online enforcement work feel free to contact us at plantservices@agr.wa.gov.