



WASHINGTON STATE CHRISTMAS TREE GROWERS



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 2025

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ONLINE SALES COMPLIANCE FOR HOLIDAY GREENERY AND CHRISTMAS TREES SHIPPING TO WASHINGTON

Anthony Ayers, a Pest Biologist with the Plant Services Program, conducts routine surveillance of websites and online vendors to ensure plant material shipping from out of state is compliant with Washington State quarantines. During the fall, Anthony focuses on cut holiday greenery and Christmas trees for sale online that may ship from states infested with spongy moth, elongate hemlock scale, and spotted lanternfly.

These are pests of concern to Christmas tree growers in Washington. In this article, Anthony details the procedures he typically uses to educate online vendors and his success over the years.

YEAR	# OF BUSINESSES CONTACTED	# OF REGULATED ARTICLES
2022	15	261
2023	26	413
2024	25	447



SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

When I was first assigned this project in 2022, I started by searching "Christmas" on Google Maps within the spongy moth quarantine area. I would look at parcels that I arbitrarily divided between roads, county divisions, and natural features. I maintained a log of the parcels I searched to track where I looked and where I still needed to search.

I would contact businesses I found via email or site forms and informed them of the Washington State spongy moth quarantine. Most would not respond, but some would agree to

add a disclaimer to their website, some would let me know they were working with their state's export agency, and others would agree to not sell their products to Washington State.

This work enabled me to create a comprehensive list of Christmas green producers from within the spongy moth quarantine area. Using this list, I would send a message in subsequent years reminding vendors of our state's spongy moth quarantine.

In addition Google, I would also search Etsy for any Christmas greenery. This, however, did not yield as many results as Google. Most of the products listed as Christmas greenery were imitations, not actual live specimens.



FEMALE SPONGY MOTH

GET YOUR LICENSED CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER STICKERS

Exporters and others wanting to clearly identify themselves as licensed can purchase stickers identifying themselves as licensed Christmas tree growers in Washington. A roll of 250 stickers is \$7.80. Contact WSDA Plant Services (360) 902-1874 for more information or to order.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LICENSED CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER

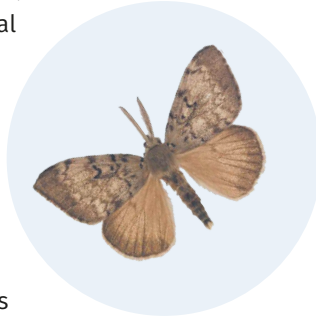
The producer of this stock is licensed to grow Christmas trees in the State of Washington as required by WAC 16-401-045.

AGR 816-6020

By authority of the Director of Agriculture

SPONGY MOTH UPDATE

Lymantria dispar dispar, commonly known as spongy moth, is a devastating forest pest established in the Eastern United States capable of defoliating hundreds of thousands of acres annually during outbreaks. The Flighted Spongy Moth Complex (FSMC) is widely distributed in Asia and is a national priority pest primarily introduced to the U.S. through shipping. While spongy moth consumes over 300 species of trees and shrubs preferring broad-leaf deciduous trees, FSMC will readily feed on conifers and has an expanded host list of over 500 species of trees. Severe and successive years of defoliation cause stress for trees and can lead to tree mortality, destruction of vital habitat, and have impacts on forest health, stream ecosystems, and wildlife.



The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has been surveying for and preventing the introduction of spongy moth in Washington State for over 50 years. This year, WSDA's Pest Program launched a robust survey of over 16,000 traps statewide focused on known pathways of introduction. Recreational areas and transportation corridors were trapped at a density of one trap per square mile, and ports and waterways were surveyed as high as 36 traps per square mile. As the spongy moth survey concludes, there have been 22 spongy moth detections in 2025, including two locations where multiple moths were detected in an area of known pest activity. Persistent moth detections such as these can indicate the presence of a reproducing population. In the coming months, WSDA will continue working in these locations surveying for other life stages, such as egg masses, to determine the next best steps for ongoing management. Visit agr.wa.gov/moths to learn more about Spongy moth in Washington State.

WSDA STAFF UPDATES

Nicole Pierman is the new Administrative Assistant 3 with the Plant Services Program. Nicole will be sending out license renewal reminders and helping growers with their license applications on PISCES in January. You can contact Nicole at 360-902-1874 or nicole.pierman@agr.wa.gov.

Joshua Light is the new program inspector for the Mount Vernon area. He covers Skagit and north Snohomish counties and will assist Christmas tree growers if they need export inspections or compliance agreements for shipping. You can contact Joshua at (360) 661-5842 or joshua.light@agr.wa.gov.



KEY BENEFITS OF A CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER LICENSE

Obtaining a Christmas Tree Grower License benefits both you and the industry as a whole:

- Support ongoing disease and postharvest research that improves your ability to grow, manage, and market top-quality Christmas trees.
- Get important updates on pest issues, rule changes, legislation, and research that could impact your business.
- Ensure the delivery of healthy, pest-free Christmas trees from your field to living rooms worldwide.
- Enhance communication between growers and WSDA/USDA in the event of a quarantine.

Apply online for 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 Nicole Pierman.



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Plant Services Program

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