

WASHINGTON STATE CHRISTMAS TREE GROWERS



ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2019

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Chris Aldrich

Natives Northwest
Christmas Trees
591 Leonard Rd
Onalaska, WA 98570
(360) 978-4611

Greg Hunter

Hunter Christmas Trees
7413 Yelm Hwy SE
Olympia, WA 98513
(360) 490-4216 cell

Kristi Scholz-O'Leary

Snowshoe Evergreen
13921 McCutcheon Rd E
Orting, WA 98360
(253) 848-3492

Alice Rockhill

karockhill@whidbey.com

Shelley Sprouffske

Sprouffske Trees, Inc.
14241 Finian Rd SE
Rainier, WA 98576
(206) 250-4575

Bruce Wiseman

The Tree Wisemans
26500 NE 53rd Ave
Ridgefield, WA 98642
(360) 887-4582

WSDA:

Cindy Cooper

Plant Services Program Mgr
(360) 902-2062
ccooper@agr.wa.gov

Scott Brooks

Plant Services Inspection
Supervisor (West side)
(360) 740-1213
sbrooks@agr.wa.gov

Lara Massey

Program Specialist
(360) 902-1922
lmassey@agr.wa.gov

Cheryl Spink

Customer Service Specialist
(360) 902-1874
cspink@agr.wa.gov

Brad White, Ph.D.

Plant Protection Division
Assistant Director
(360) 902-1907
bwhite@agr.wa.gov

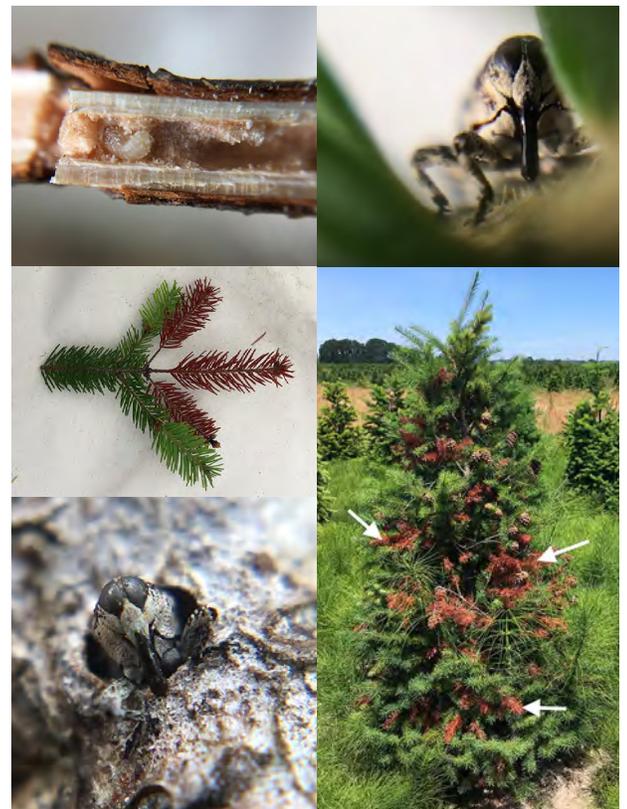
DOUGLAS FIR TWIG WEEVIL Thomas Whitney, Washington State University-Puyallup

The Douglas fir twig weevil is a small, native beetle known previously only as a minor pest; its larvae develop within shoots and can cause branch dieback in young trees. In recent years, this insect has become more common in Christmas tree and bough production stands in Washington and Oregon.

The pest can cost small and medium sized growers tens of thousands of dollars and it has caused numerous Christmas tree load rejections in trees bound for Mexico over the last four years. The beetle is attacking not just Douglas fir but most true fir species as well. We are concerned this native beetle may become an increasingly serious pest in the future.

Research at Washington State University-Puyallup funded by the Christmas Tree Promotion Board is now underway to better understand the biology of the Douglas fir twig weevil. Preliminary results suggest this is a single species able to feed and develop in multiple host trees. WSU has established monitoring plots to determine the number of degree-days required for beetle development, which should inform growers of the best time to spray to most effectively manage the pest. WSU is also conducting experiments to determine the beetle's preferences among the common Christmas tree species.

If you suspect twig weevils are in your trees, please contact Thomas Whitney at thomas.whitney@wsu.edu.



Photos: Thomas Whitney, Washington State University - Puyallup

GET YOUR LICENSED CHRISTMAS TREE GROWER STICKERS

Purchase stickers identifying you as a licensed Christmas tree grower 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

YOUR LICENSE BENEFITS YOU

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.

FIRST EVER HOKKAIDO GYPSY MOTH DISCOVERED IN WASHINGTON

This year WSDA's gypsy moth trappers made an exceptional find – the first-ever detection of a Hokkaido gypsy moth (*Lymantria umbrosa*) in the United States. It was detected in Woodway, a town on the Puget Sound in the southwest corner of Snohomish County.

The Hokkaido gypsy moth is a type of Asian gypsy moth, which means that the females can fly and they feed on about 500 different species of trees and shrubs, including conifers. According to most literature, larch appears to be their preferred host.



WSDA will evaluate the catch results and consider eradication proposals after trapping and egg mass surveys are complete later this fall. Visit agr.wa.gov/gypsymoth to stay informed about WSDA's gypsy moth trapping and eradication activities. ✂

ELONGATE SCALE FOUND ON OUT OF STATE CHRISTMAS TREES

In November 2018, WSDA was alerted about Christmas trees from North Carolina that were potentially infested with Elongate hemlock scale (*Fiorinia externa*). Elongate hemlock scale is a conifer pest not known to occur in the west. It primarily attacks hemlock, but it can also target true firs, spruce, and Douglas fir. Inspectors with WSDA's Plant Services Program followed up at the receiving retail stores and intercepted three infested Fraser fir trees.

The trees from North Carolina were ordered destroyed, but the situation highlighted a bigger problem: there are few quarantine rules in place to protect our Christmas tree industry. Cut trees can enter the state without notification or pest-free certification.

One way to remedy this would be to create a notification rule for all out of state Christmas trees. Receivers in Washington would be required to notify the department when they receive Christmas trees from out of state and hold them for inspection for 24 hours. This would give WSDA inspectors an opportunity to look at cut trees originating from high-risk pest areas, such as states with Spotted Lantern Fly, Gypsy moth or Elongate hemlock scale. Any cut trees

found to be infested could be ordered destroyed, treated, or returned to the state of origin.

Washington already has a notification rule for nursery stock entering our state that has been in place since 2005. A Christmas tree notification rule for Washington could be modeled on that, and go into effect as soon as 2020, if our industry supports this safeguard. Oregon recently instituted a similar notification rule for Christmas trees entering their state, which will be effective later this year.

Until a solution is implemented, it is important to have a few best management practices in place:

- When taking delivery from an outside source, you should do a truck inspection.
 - Were the trees shook?
 - Unbundle a few trees and look for pests and debris.
 - Call WSDA if you find any pests of concern.

To provide feedback on establishing a notification rule for Christmas trees, contact Cindy Cooper at 360-902-2062. ✂



Plant Services Program

Phone: (360) 902-1922 | Fax: (360) 902-2094

Email: plantservices@agr.wa.gov

On the internet at:

agr.wa.gov