



Whenever you think about your personal stewardship commitments, pause to consider this. Our stewardship role reaches beyond the walls of our houses of worship and the boundaries of our towns into the magnificent creation around us. And part of that natural world, the sanctuary of our north Georgia forests, is in grave danger and needs your help.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Like the blight that killed 3 billion America Chestnut trees throughout eastern North America in the 1930's, another pest, the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), is now destroying our hemlock forests. At present, the devastation from this tiny parasite has spread from Virginia north to Maine and south into Georgia.

Infestations of the HWA have been confirmed in at least 14 north Georgia counties, and the problem is traveling fast. If we do nothing, **80% of our hemlocks may die in the next 5 to 10 years.**

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

- Aesthetically, hemlocks are one of our most beautiful trees. They contribute so much to the enjoyment of those who live and play among them, especially homeowners and the many people who come to north Georgia for tourism and outdoors recreation.
- Environmentally, hemlocks are vital in providing food and habitat for animals such as bear, turkey, white-tailed deer and over 90 species of birds. They provide abundant shade for native plants and keep mountain streams cool and clean for trout and other native fish. They protect watershed and water quality, preventing build up of harmful bacteria and massive soil erosion.
- Economically, healthy mature trees such as hemlocks add an average of 7-10% to homeowners' property values. They provide the net cooling effect of 10 room-sized air conditioners running 20 hours a day, and save billions of dollars a year by filtering CO₂ and other pollutants from the air as they produce oxygen for us to breathe.
- Spiritually, hemlocks are part of the creation over which we have a God-given stewardship responsibility. They offer unique teachable moments with our children about the marvelously complex interdependencies in nature, respect and responsibility, conservation and wise use of resources, history and a sense of our place in the world.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Take care of your own trees.** Inspect the hemlocks on your property to look for early signs of an HWA infestation, and if you find it, call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010 for advice and take action early to treat them.
- **Spread the word.** Share the message about the HWA problem and solutions through word of mouth and any e-mail lists, web sites, and newsletters you have access to.
- **Help your neighbors.** Learn how to develop a neighborhood hemlock help plan and work together to suppress the woolly adelgid in the widest possible area.
- **Join the fight for the hemlocks.** Share your time and talent as a volunteer with Save Georgia's Hemlocks, sponsor a local Hemlock Help Clinic, participate in outreach to children and community groups, or help with a charitable project to plant or treat hemlocks. And please share your financial support too. We are a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so all donations are tax-deductible.

Thoughts for the Mind and Spirit

Trees are:

Created by God – “Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth;” and it was so. (Gen. 1:11)

Good – “And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.” (Gen. 1:12)

Owned by God – “The earth is the Lord’s and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.” (Ps. 24:1)

Highly Valued – based on their use as symbols of:

- righteousness (Ps. 1:1-3)
- believer’s life (Prov. 11:30)
- wisdom (Prov. 3:18)
- prosperity of God’s people (Isaiah 65:21-22)
- good character (Matt. 7:17-19)
- covenant Rom. 11:24)
- eternal life (Rev. 22:14)

God intends us to be:

Mindful of His Gifts – “Then God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed.” (Gen 1:29)

Students of His Creation – But ask the animals, and they will teach you; or birds of the air and they will tell you; or speak to the earth and it will teach you; or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the lord has done this. In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:7-10)

Caretakers over His Creation – “Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet.” (Ps. 8:6)

Active Stewards of His Gifts – In the parable of the talents “His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.” (Matt. 25:23)

Hemlocks have a place in the past, present, and future:

Hemlocks can live hundreds of years, which gives them a unique place in history. If you do the math, it’s possible that:

- The great grandfathers of some of today’s hemlocks were flourishing when Jesus walked the earth.
- The grandfathers of some of today’s hemlocks were mighty when the Magna Carta was signed and the King James Bible was written.
- The fathers of some of today’s hemlocks stood proudly as our Constitution was signed and sadly absorbed the soldiers’ blood during the Civil War.
- For generations hemlocks have sheltered us, our homes, countless numbers of woodland plants and animals, and improved our environment. Without them, we will all be diminished.

Please make a commitment to ensure that the magnificent hemlock will be here for our children, grandchildren, and many generations into the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please visit our web site www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org or call the Hemlock Help Linesm 706-429-8010.

TO DONATE: Your financial support is much need and greatly appreciated. To make a secure on-line donation via PayPal, go to www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Membership_&_Donations.htm and click the Donate button. To donate by mail, make your check payable to Save Georgia’s Hemlocks and send it to Save Georgia’s Hemlocks, 37 Woody Bend, Dahlonega, GA 30533. All donations are tax-deductible, and you will receipt a tax receipt.

TO JOIN: You’re invited to become a member of Save Georgia’s Hemlocks and choose from many interesting and rewarding opportunities for volunteer service. Go to www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Membership_&_Donations.htm and join on-line, or print and mail the membership form to Save Georgia’s Hemlocks at the address above.

THANKS!