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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Time to Save Hemlocks Is NOW!

You've probably heard that the hemlocks in north Georgia are being threatened by a spreading infestation of the hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive insect from Asia with no local natural predator. You can identify it by the tiny white woolly egg sacs that on the underside of the hemlock branches. The bad news is that if infested trees are not treated, they will die within as few as 3 to 6 years. The good news is that homeowners can save as many of their hemlocks as they want with safe, easy-to-use, and inexpensive chemical controls. And NOW is the best time to do it.

Doing it yourself. Treating your own hemlocks is the most cost-effective option. The recommended treatment product for mild to moderate infestations is a water-soluble powder containing 75% Imidacloprid (the same nicotine-based substance used in pet flea collars). The treatment process itself is easy, using a soil injector to pump a specific amount of solution directly into the feeder root mass around the base of each tree.

Hiring a professional. If you aren't into doing it yourself, you can contract with a qualified local professional for the services. "Qualified" means the company is properly licensed and insured, specializes in treating hemlocks, will travel to your property to provide a free estimate, and charges reasonable rates.

Figuring the cost. The cost is based on the treatment product used and the size (trunk diameter at chest height) of the tree. For example, treating your own trees with Imidacloprid can cost as little as \$.18 to \$.54 per inch, so you can save a large hemlock 16 inches in diameter for about \$4.32! If you hire a professional, saving that same tree might cost around \$24. For badly infested or very large trees that need a faster-acting product, the cost is about 3 times higher but still quite reasonable for saving a tree so vital to our landscape.

If you're considering *not* treating your trees, here are some "hidden" costs to think about. Having one large tree removed can cost anywhere from \$300 to \$1500. Healthy mature trees such as hemlocks can contribute 7 – 10% of property value; so on a \$200,000 property, losing all the hemlocks could lose the homeowner \$14,000 – \$20,000 or more.

Treating now. Spring is the best time to treat hemlocks because they're actively taking up water and nutrients and can readily absorb the treatment material through the roots. As it moves upward into the plant tissue, feeding insects ingest it and die. And since there's a period during the spring when two generations of adelgids can overlap, it's important to start the relief process as early as possible.

Help is available. For information on borrowing soil injectors, advice on purchasing treatment products economically, treatment instructions, list of qualified local professionals, on-site consultation from local Facilitators, scheduling a Hemlock Help presentation for your group, or other services, please call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010 or visit www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 501(c)3 non-profit, grass-roots organization of Georgia citizens who are dedicated to preserving endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service.