

Your letters to the editor

Woolly adelgid is wreaking havoc

Dear Editor:

The hemlock woolly adelgid is wreaking havoc across Georgia. We're seeing many large hemlocks dead or dying in the northeast counties, increasingly serious infestations in the north central area, and new adelgid reports in some northwest counties. Given the rapid pace at which the problem is spreading and the awful damage that's occurring, Save Georgia's Hemlocks urges you to take immediate action to save these magnificent trees.

With our mild climate, hemlock treatment can be done year-round except when the ground is frozen or water-logged, so this fall is a good time to do it. Don't wait until spring while the voracious insects feed all winter. Treatment is an easy, safe, and inexpensive process, especially compared to the cost of taking down large dead trees and the potential loss of property value.

Most mildly to moderately infested hemlocks can be treated with a product containing 75 percent Imidacloprid, the same ingredient that's in flea collars. For property owners who can do the work themselves and purchase the generic version of the product, the cost is between \$.18 and \$.55 per trunk diameter inch. For folks who need or prefer a professional to do the work, the cost is still quite reasonable, averaging \$1 - 2 per trunk diameter inch.

Trees that are very large or heavily infested can be treated using a product sold as Safari. It costs more, but it's very effective and fast, usually controlling an infestation in three to eight weeks.

Hemlocks are so beautiful and important to the environmental and economic health of our communities, it's vital that property owners who are lucky enough to have hemlocks take action to save them. And if you don't have hemlocks or don't even own property, you can still help by sharing the hemlock message with others, becoming a hemlock volunteer, or providing financial support for Save Georgia's Hemlocks' educational and charitable service efforts.

For more information including places that sell the treatment products or lend soil injectors, treatment instructions, or qualified local professionals, call the Hemlock Help Line 706-429-8010 or visit the Save Georgia's Hemlocks web site www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

**Donna Shearer, Chairman
Save Georgia's Hemlocks**