



Newsletter
2011 - Issue #3

Hemlock Happenings

A Publication of
Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Hemlock Happenings is an e-newsletter for members, facilitators and other volunteers, donors, and friends of Save Georgia's Hemlocks to share hemlock news, educational information, service opportunities, and announcements. If you'd like to submit an article or announcement, please send it to the e-mail address below. Readers' feedback is always welcome.

Advice from the front

While we did not see an increase in the outer boundaries of the infestation areas (comparing maps provided by the U. S. Forest Service and Georgia Forestry Commission from 2009 to 2010), in 2011 we've seen a noticeable increase in the number of newly infested trees and a decline in the health of hemlocks that have been infested for several years. Many trees in the northeast part of the state have died, and many more in the north central counties are now in serious distress.

The truth is we really don't know how far gone a tree can be before it can't be saved. The answer depends on a number of factors including the size of the tree, percentage of defoliation, and other factors affecting tree health such as other pests or drought.

In choosing which trees to try to save, property owners might want to consider several things.

* If a tree is an important element of the landscape or has special value for other reasons, try to save it.

* If trees are along a waterway giving shade to trout populations or helping stabilize the banks, try to save them.

* If trees are growing too close to each other to grow up healthy under normal circumstances, remove some and save the best ones.

* If saving all the desirable hemlocks on a property is not an option because of cost, save as many of the big ones (18" + in diameter) as possible plus some middle-sized ones (12-18") and some small ones (1-11") to allow for forest succession.

Remember that saving trees is almost always less expensive than losing them, and SGH can help through volunteer service projects. Call the Hemlock Help Line to learn more.

Hike & Help for the Hemlocks

On October 1, Save Georgia's Hemlocks and our good friends in the Benton MacKaye Trail Association teamed up to sponsor a Hike & Help for the Hemlocks along a wonderful section of the BMT that runs through the Cherry Log Mountain Development. The goals for the event were to increase awareness of the hemlock crisis, build synergy among groups and individuals who care, treat some trees that really need help, and have a good time together in the great outdoors. Mission definitely accomplished!



We had perfect weather for the day.

Following an initial orientation and training session, thirty-eight volunteers enjoyed a family-friendly hike through some beautiful woods, treated 160 HWA-infested hemlocks, and did some trail clean-up along the way. Joe Sisson, president of Sisson Company in Cherry Log, generously donated the cost of the chemicals used to treat the trees.



Teams of volunteers treated hemlocks on the trail. Shown here are Bob Pledger, John Howell, and Jim Wentworth.

When the work was done, everyone gathered beside Indian Lake for a picnic and time to get to know each other better. Jim Wentworth of the U. S. Forest Service gave us an update on the hemlocks in the national forest and the HWA control methods being used, and Jay Dement of the BMTA shared a lesson on the core principles of the Leave No Trace program for outdoor ethics.

On a second visit later in the month, SGH volunteer Facilitators treated an additional 50 large hemlocks. A product containing Imidacloprid, a mild but very effective treatment material, was applied by soil injection close to the base of each tree and is expected to provide residual protection for an average of five years.

Our sincere thanks to Joe Sisson of the Sisson Company; BMTA President Dick Evans; BMTA planners Ralph and Marge Heller; hike leaders Tom Keene and Bruce Granger; treatment team leaders Frank and Linda Gheesling, Clyde Lightfoot, Bob Pledger, John Ross, Mark Shearer, and Jim Wentworth; and all the other great volunteers who participated.

Sharing the Hemlock Message at Apple Festival

Participation in the Ellijay Apple Festival was a productive effort again this year. Eleven volunteers staffed the SGH booth on October 15-16, discussed the hemlock crisis with 130 visitors, gave out 200 sets of informational materials, got 31 hemlock saplings adopted, and received \$420 in donations. Helpers included David Armstrong, Helen Daniels, Sherry Petraroli, Frank & Linda Gheesling, Mike Carpenter, Jim Hamby, and Bruce Granger plus those shown at right.

One of the most frequently asked questions was whether trees that are already infested



Volunteers Bonnie and Ray Driver and Don Roberts had a good time sharing hemlock information with visitors to the SGH booth.

could still be saved. The answer was absolutely YES and included where to get specific information on how to save the trees.

Scouts Save Hemlocks at Foxfire



John Touchstone and fellow Boy Scouts team up with SGH to treat hemlocks at Foxfire Museum to save them from the woolly adelgid

The hemlocks at Foxfire Museum and Heritage Center in Mountain City are breathing a sigh of relief, thanks to the efforts of Eagle Scout candidate John Touchstone of Troop 62 in Cumming, GA. his troop leaders and members, and support from SGH. For several months this fall, John worked to plan and receive approval for a leadership service project benefitting the Foxfire Foundation to treat hemlock trees on their property that are infested with the hemlock woolly adelgid.

John said he chose the tree project after his family had problems with the woolly adelgid. "About a year or so before, we had to treat the trees at our lake house in that area," Touchstone said. "That's how we got in touch with Save Georgia's Hemlocks."

Following training provided by SGH, John and 18 scouts plus 7 adult leaders and other volunteers treated over 500 hemlocks in the historic village area. The cost of the Imidacloprid used for the project was covered by SGH through a grant from the Lake Rabun Fund for hemlock-related education and charitable service in Rabun County.

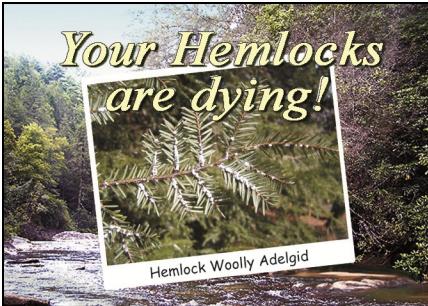


Troop 62 after a job well done at Foxfire.

Barry Stiles, Curator of the Foxfire Museum, commented, "Hemlocks are an important part of the ecosystem in the mountains. It's great that the Boy Scouts and Save Georgia's Hemlocks were able to work together to help preserve our trees at the museum before they were lost forever."

Awareness Is Key

This year SGH sent post cards to 2,000 property owners in north Georgia to raise awareness of the hemlock crisis and let people know that help is available. The response has been quite positive, and many calls have come in to the Hemlock Help Line for information on what can be done to save the trees. Another mailing is planned for spring 2012.



In the meantime, please help us spread the word. There are 3 main messages:

1. The hemlocks are in trouble and will die if not treated. Many have already died.
2. Property owners can save as many of their hemlocks as they want. It's easy to do, safe, and inexpensive.
3. Lots of free help is available from SGH. Just call the Hemlock Help Line.

Technical Tips

Safari is now available in 12-ounce size for \$139 including tax and will treat 113 inches dbh at the lowest dosing rate. That's \$11.59 per ounce, compared to \$7.29 per ounce when you buy it in the 3-lb jug. It costs more per inch, but if that's all you need, no point in buying more. Check the stores on our [Contacts](#) page or shop on-line.

A new Supplemental Label for Safari 20 SG has been published that contains no requirement for a 20-foot setback from water. We continue to advise caution to keep the material from contact with waterways. See our [Product Labels](#) page.

Many **soil injectors** that have been in use for several years are no longer working properly in that they do not dispense the standard dose per pump of the handle. So if you own or borrow one, test the calibration before use.

1. Put a couple cups of water into the injector. Insert the tip into a measuring cup.
2. Pump the handle 6 times and see if you get exactly 1 oz or 12 times for 2 oz.
3. If you don't get the right amount, adjust the calibration collar higher or lower and retest.

If this doesn't work, call the Hemlock Help Line for advice on other remedies.

Treatment Help Is Available

Increasingly, property owners are finding themselves between a rock and a hard place financially and less able to do those things that protect the beauty and value of their property. One of the most serious threats to the economic and environmental health of the community comes from the hemlock woolly adelgid, and many people in north Georgia are still unaware that help is available to save their trees.

On the last weekend of November, an energetic group from Go Outdoors USA went immediately from Facilitator training to an SGH volunteer project helping property owners in Dahlonega treat their trees to kill the bugs.

The labor and most of the chemicals were donated, and the property owners got to participate in the project too.



New SGH Facilitators from Go Outdoors USA work on a hemlock treatment project.

In the space of 2½ hours, the team was able to treat 255 trees with Imidacloprid or Safari, depending on the infestation level. A return trip is planned for next year to give the largest and most heavily infested trees a follow-up treatment.

Charitable service is a key focus for SGH, and we encourage anyone who needs help to save their trees or wants to help on volunteer projects to call the Hemlock Help Line.

CALENDAR

We are setting our calendar for 2012 now and would like to hear from groups or individuals interested in any of the following:

- * Hemlock Help Clinic
- * Facilitator training workshop
- * Presentation for Master Gardeners, other garden clubs, POAs, churches, conservation groups, or civic organizations
- * Hemlock Lesson (GPS-compatible) for elementary or middle school students
- * Hemlock information booth or hemlock seedling/potting project for a festival or other special event
- * Hemlock treatment or planting project
Call the Hemlock Help Line to let us know.