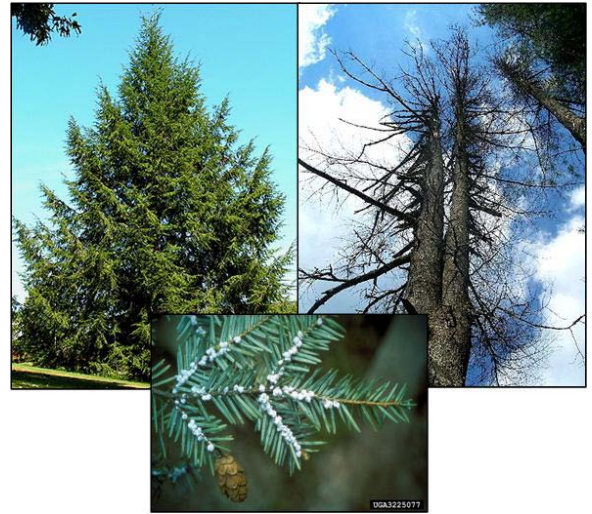


Press Release – January 12, 2010

HELP IS HERE FOR TENNESSEE HEMLOCKS!

The Hemlocks in east Tennessee are being threatened by a spreading infestation of the Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), an invasive insect native to Asia with no local natural predator. Hemlock stands are among the only old growth forests in the east and are of great importance to wildlife, water quality, local economy, and basic quality of life.

The bad news is that if appropriate action is not taken soon, almost all of these magnificent trees will die within the next 10 years. The good news is that SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS, a nonprofit organization, is offering a new program of education and charitable service to help homeowners all across north Georgia and now southeast Tennessee to manage the health of their Hemlocks against the woolly adelgid.



The HEMLOCK HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS program focuses on enhancing public awareness of the Hemlock woolly adelgid problem and the practical solutions that are available and enabling homeowners to save the Hemlocks on their own property for the lowest possible cost. Designed to operate as a no-cost or low-cost community service, it is available now in southeast Tennessee wherever the HWA is a serious threat.

Homeowners can call the Hemlock Help Line (706-429-8010) with their Hemlock questions and receive accurate, up-to-date information and advice. For individuals interested in the do-it-yourself option, the Hemlock Help Line can provide information on borrowing a soil injector, advice on purchasing the treatment product economically, and instructions on the treatment procedure. For those who prefer to contract with a licensed professional to treat their trees, the Hemlock Help Line can supply a list of qualified local companies specializing in saving Hemlocks along with their average rate structure.

The public is invited to a free Hemlock clinic sponsored by BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION (www.bmta.org) in conjunction with SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS. The program will provide information on the threat to our Hemlocks and how to recognize it, the options for saving these valuable trees, and the help that is available through the HEMLOCK HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS program. It will be held on Saturday, February 6 at 2 p.m. at the Tellico Plains Community Center on Bank Street across from the BP station and next to the Tellicafe. The presentation will last until about 4 p.m. and will be followed by a Facilitator training program from 4 – 6 p.m. for individuals interested in learning how to help their neighborhoods get started to save their Hemlocks. For more information and to preregister, contact the BMTA representative, Rick Harris at 423-253-6358 or email him at HarrisRi@aol.com. We encourage you to come early, visit some of our scenic attractions such as Bald River Falls, eat lunch in the Tellico Plains community, and then attend the conference at 2 p.m.

If you have Hemlocks that may be in danger, the BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL ASSOCIATION encourages you to attend this SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS conference and to call the Hemlock Help Line (706-429-8010). Please don't wait.