

EXTENSION
T O D A Y
100.9
WIFM FEATURES:
 Extension Professionals from Alleghany,
 Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin Counties
Wednesday @ 9:05am
Saturdays @ 10:05am

State University
A&T State University
NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
 Empowering People • Providing Solutions

FARM BUREAU
 SURRY COUNTY

**Tune in to
 "Extension Today"
 on WIFM Radio
 Wednesdays and Saturdays**

Sincerely,



David Isner
 Interim County Extension Director

DI/krm

The use of any brand name and mentioned or listing of any commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service or discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned.

Alleghany County Center

September, 2009

- Inside This Issue**
- Upcoming Events
 - Elongate Hemlock Scale
 - Fall Balsam Twig Aphid Control
 - 2009 Christmas Tree Marketing Traffic Report



Saturday, September 19
Mountain Heritage Festival
 Downtown Sparta
 10:00 a.m. ~ 4:00 p.m.

NC Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting
September 24-25, 2009
 Boone United Methodist Church
 Boone, NC

This is the 50th Anniversary Celebration, Trade Show and Farm Tour. Enclosed is the agenda and registration form for this special event. Deadline for registration is September 15th.

ACTA & Cooperative Extension Christmas Tree Meeting
Tuesday, October 6, 2009
 7:00 p.m.
 County Office Building
 Conference Room
 (90 South Main Street)

Agenda:

- ✓ Fall Pest Control
- ✓ Deer Management
- ✓ ACTA Updates

Contact Us

Alleghany County Center
 PO Box 7
 90 South Main Street
 Sparta, NC 28675

(336) 372-5597— Phone
 (336) 372-2279— Fax

alleghany.ces.ncsu.edu

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.

Training for Small Business Owners / Entrepreneurs

A six session training program offering business skills, development and guidance in marketing, bookkeeping, financial projections / analysis, lending and finance. The six sessions will be held on Monday afternoons beginning at 1:00 p.m. until 4:00, October 5th and finishing on November 9th. Registration fee is \$150—provides NXLEVEL Workbook and Resource Guide, classroom interaction with professional services providers and refreshments for each session.

Registration payment is due by Tuesday, September 15th, 5:00 p.m. at the Alleghany County Center of NC Cooperative Extension (90 S. Main St.)

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
 State University
 A&T State University
 Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Alleghany County Center
 PO Box 7
 Sparta, NC 28675

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
 State University
 A&T State University
 Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Elongate Hemlock Scale *Submitted By: Bryan Davis, Agricultural Program Asst. BMP Tech. Jill Sidebottom, Area Ext. Forestry Spec. IPM Mtn. Conifers*



Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS) has been now been identified on Fraser Fir in Western Alleghany County. Growers most often notice the scale when shearing and tagging trees. Masses of waxy secretions which can be so abundant as to give infested needles a white appearance. If EHS is present in small numbers they may go unnoticed for a year or two until numbers increase.

Regular scouting is needed to find and identify EHS before infestations become damaging. EHS may be located only on certain areas of a farm. Flag infested trees to help with tracking infestations. Algal growth on needles can sometimes resemble EHS, but can be wiped off. EHS will be located on the underside of the needles. Another key to identification is that there will be both white and brown scales present. Males are white and females brown.

Management of this pest is difficult. Adults are the enclosed in a protective scale covering. There is

also the waxy covering of the Fraser Fir needle itself. Adults typically become established in 2-4 year old growth farther back in the foliage. Thorough spray coverage is necessary for control. High pressure spraying will be more effective than mistblower applications. Applications made in April and May for Balsam Twig Aphid (BTA) will help control EHS, but July and August treatments best address abundant crawlers and immature scales. Late September or October treatments are not effective at controlling EHS.

The chemicals that have shown the best control are combinations of either Dimethaote and Asana, or Dimethoate and Prev-Am. Horticultural Oil may provide some control. Severe infestations may require a second application made within a 12-month period. Scout thoroughly to determine the need for another application. Evaluating control effectiveness may be challenging. Careful examination of the scales about a month after application using magnification is best. Within a few months of treatment, dead scales will appear dried up. Also, scout the following growing season to see if crawlers are moving back onto the new growth.

Fall Balsam Twig Aphid Control *Submitted By: Bryan Davis, Agri. Program Asst. BMP Tech. Jill Sidebottom, Area Ext. Forestry Spec. IPM Mtn. Conifers*

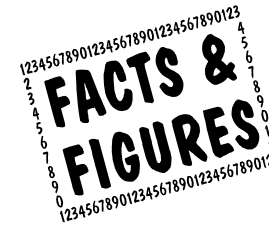
Taking care of pest control in the Fall can help to reduce the Spring workload that growers encounter each year. Fall treatments of Talstar (Wisdom) or Asana can provide control of Balsam Twig Aphids (BTA) the following Spring. If growers are treating in the Fall for Cinara Aphids, Balsam Woolly Adelgid (BWA) or Elongate Hemlock Scale, adding treatment for BTA helps efficiency of chemical applications, may eliminate unnecessary pesticide applications and reduce labor costs.

Another advantage of Fall treatments is the reduction of problems with pests such as Hemlock Rust Mites (HRM) that tend to follow treatments made in the Spring and Summer. If HRM are present in the Fall or if the field has a history of HRM, growers can add Envidor to their treatments. Envidor can also be added if Spruce Spider Mites (SSM) are present. Fall applications of these products can prevent BTA eggs from hatching, or if they do hatch, the aphid will be unhealthy and die. Early to mid August treatments may lead to more problems with HRM, due to loss of natural predators. For treatments made in September or October, neither HRM or SSM are usually a major problem. Growers should plan on scouting the following Spring to monitor for BTA, HRM and SSM.

To achieve the desired control growers should either use Talstar/Wisdom at a rate of 40 oz per acre or Asana at a rate of 10 ozs. per 100 gallons of water with a high pressure sprayer. Mistblower applications can work where sufficient coverage can be applied to thoroughly wet the trees. Fall mistblower applications should be made with a minimum of 40 gallons of water per acre to provide adequate BTA control. Scout even more thoroughly the following Spring to ensure of adequate control, especially in the middles of the field where coverage may be light.

2009 CT Marketing Traffic Report

Submitted By: Jeff Owen, Area Ext. Forestry Specialist, Christmas Tree Production



"Snarled traffic on major thoroughfares - Expect delays." Christmas tree markets are far different from a highway system, but neither work well around a bottleneck. Last year we probably sold as many trees as normal, if not a few more -- we just had more we wanted to move. Now, two years into an oversupply and a recession, Christmas tree buyers are getting lots of calls from other suppliers about potential bargains. Even loyal customers have to re-think how they are going to handle their purchase of wholesale trees. It all takes time. When you have more drivers on the road shopping for bargains, there is going to be a traffic jam!

There are patterns we can learn from, however. Bargain shopping takes time and sales will come very late. Tree prices have typically strengthened late in the season other years when buyers cannot find the quality or service they need from the bargain-sellers. Last year, more than one grower was rewarded for keeping a "poker-face" early, not panicking, and waiting until late October or even into November to close a deal! Several growers held firm on their prices last year and moved what they needed to. 2009 may be a different year, but price-cutting shouldn't be the first or only strategy employed.

Several old-timers have said that past recessions were good for retail Christmas tree sales. People stay home. They focus on the traditional Christmas theme. They buy a real tree. It might be smaller than last year's, but it is the symbol for the season. In this recession, the majority of families that held on to their home (and its cathedral ceiling) will still need a tree to fill it. There is hope.

Buyers will likely hedge their bets by ordering low, but then if sales are good, they will need to re-order late. There were a lot of late season orders last year; plan for more of the same this year. Growers have traditionally backed off from marketing when they get ready for harvest, but with a late year, some late season advertising could really pay off. More than one grower hit the road in late November last year to make more contacts for sales this year. Part of the preparation for late season orders is to be flexible. How can you better accommodate customers? A lot of customer service involves what you can provide with trucking. Can you build a full load from several partial loads? While your customers may be ordering small to manage their finances, a side benefit is that trees cut later will be fresher at Christmas. Be sure to play the freshness card as you market your services. If you don't do well on the phone, hire someone with the appropriate skills.

Of course, we all need a dose of reality. Some growers turned away viable offers last year as a result of an inflated perception of their own crop's value. Stumpage prices should be less than FOB - less the cost of marketing, harvest, and a profit margin for the re-wholesaler. Number twos should be less than ones or premiums. In 2008, there was a \$16 spread in the price of 6-7 foot Frasers in NC—part perception, part reality. Where do your trees fit in?

Several growers put a positive spin on the oversupply. With a little honesty, they admit to lowering standards of quality and cutting below grade in past years. Now is an "opportunity" to improve your grade and your reputation for quality. Cull the culls instead of putting a #2 ribbon in them. Give an average for your size class with as many six-foot-eleven-inch trees as six-foot-one-inch trees. Be sure to tell your customers! If we look for the best analogy for Christmas tree markets, it might be a Christmas tree itself. It takes a long time to grow a quality tree or a quality market. It's not "rocket science" but, you have to do things in a timely way before harvest. Advertising, going to trade shows, keeping a website, and investing in customer relationships happen annually (just like planting, fertilizing, and pest control). Neither trees or markets grow themselves!

In the short term, focus on what you can influence. Ship quality trees. Provide better-than-ever customer service. Provide flexible transportation. Keep advertising. Visit customers during the retail season. Visit potential markets. Do what you need to do, but think twice before you cave in to a bargain hunter. Cutting price may be the simplest way to go, but it shouldn't be the first thing you do.