



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

(Adelges tsugae)



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Description

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is a small, aphid-like insect which attacks and feeds on North American hemlock trees. HWA can be hard to spot as they are very small (<1.5 mm) and look like tiny black specks. HWA can be identified by the white, woolly masses (ovisacs) they form on the undersides of hemlock branches at the base of the needles. Infested hemlock trees will have gray-tinted needles and have noticeable needle loss and branch dieback. All species of hemlock are vulnerable to HWA, however, the most damage and death typically occurs in eastern hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) and Carolina hemlocks (*Tsuga caroliniana*).

Native Range and Original Use

HWA are native to East Asia, where in its native range is managed by natural predators and parasitoids, as well as by host resistance.

Habitat and Dispersion

HWA was introduced accidentally to North America from Japan and was first detected in the eastern United States near Richmond, Virginia in 1951. HWA has since spread along the East Coast and has been identified in at least 20 states in the eastern U.S. HWA is also present in the western United States, having been introduced in the 1920s.

HWA are present within hemlock stands and are able to spread through equipment and gear used near an infestation, as well as through physically moving infested material. Birds are a major source of dispersion for HWA.



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Best Management Practice

To help stop the spread of HWA, be sure to clean any equipment or gear that was used near an infestation site, even if you did not directly contact any trees. Leave brush and other infested materials where found, do not transport branches or firewood from infested sites.

If you have trees on your property which have been confirmed to be infested with HWA, contact the Hemlock Initiative website for tips on how to manage the infestation, and confirm the identification of HWA on iMap.

Sources: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7250.html>

<https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/id-report/insects/hemlock-woolly-adelgid>.

If you find HWA, report the infestation on iMap with a clear photograph and GPS location.