

Kentucky Division of Forestry

Programs to assist woodland owners and protect
and enhance the forest resources of Kentucky



Forest Health Program

The forest health office deals with insect and disease problems, as well as exotic invasive plants in Kentucky's woodlands. While there are always mini-outbreaks of an insect or disease problem, there are a few major pest threats that this office is closely monitoring.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

This aphid-like insect attacks only eastern hemlock trees. It removes nutrients from the tree through its feeding activity and slowly kills the tree over a three- to ten-year period. This pest has killed large numbers of hemlock to the east, northeast, and southeast of Kentucky.

Hemlock is not an economically important tree species in Kentucky, but it occupies some very ecologically delicate sites in the eastern part of the state. It is found along mountain streams in moist soils. It helps keep streams cool in the summer for cold-water organisms to thrive and provides some nesting sites as well as winter protection to wildlife.

This insect is active in the winter months and can be easily seen as white, woolly masses on the undersides of hemlock branches. This pest has been recently detected in Harlan County and is being controlled by chemical soil injection in the limited outbreak. The Kentucky Division of Forestry surveys hemlock stands in eastern, southeastern and northeastern Kentucky twice per year.

If you have questions regarding forest health issues, please contact your local Division of Forestry office, or call Tim McClure in Frankfort at 800-866-0555.



Photo Courtesy of Connecticut Ag. Exp. Station

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