

Pest Update 2004

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In Winter 2002 I wrote an article entitled, "Pest Update," where I wrote about balsam woolly adelgid control (BWA), white grubs, and elongate hemlock scale. This article updates the information on these and other pests.

BALSAM WOOLLY ADELGID. We now have a track record with some of the newer products for BWA control mentioned in the 2002 article - Thionex, Astro and Talstar. All appear to be controlling BWA well. BWA control still depends as much on how the material was put out as what material was used. Be sure to get good coverage, wetting the entire tree and especially under the branches where they join the trunk and at the base of the trunk. Remove any badly damaged Fraser fir or any nearby sources of BWA if at all possible.

We've also been trying to determine if all the synthetic pyrethroids create subsequent problems with rust mites as Asana does. Astro and Talstar are from the same chemical family as Asana. Unfortunately, Astro and Talstar appear to have the same effect of increasing problems with rust mites after their use as does Asana. Rust mite problems appear to be worse when these materials are spring applied. Be sure to scout for rust mites the year after application to make sure they don't cause damage. Thionex doesn't appear to cause as many problems with rust mites, but the potential is still exists. Thanks especially to Doug Hundley and Jerry Moody in Avery County for this work.

WHITE GRUBS. White grub control continues to be a problem. I've received a grant from the NCCTA to work with

grubs. Flagship (common name thiamethoxam) is now labeled for Christmas tree use. I plan on looking at control with this product as well as Marathon (imidacloprid), Dylox, Lorsban, and root dips with Talstar. Also with this grant I will be sampling fields and areas of seedling production for what species are most prevalent.

Root dips with Talstar are an option that growers have been using in other areas of the country. Talstar is labeled as a bare-root treatment for preventative root weevil larval control. One gallon of Talstar Nursery Flowable is diluted with 100 gallons of water and the roots of the plants dipped for ten seconds before planting. One problem with this is that workers planting the seedlings must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when they handle the seedlings within 12 hours of treatment. This includes long-sleeved shirt and long pants, chemical-resistant gloves such as barrier laminate, butyl rubber, nitrile rubber, neoprene rubber, polyvinyl chloride or viton and shoes plus socks.

According to Dr. Richard Cowles with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, bifenthrin, the active ingredient of Talstar, will last for between three to four years when protected from sunlight. He had made treatments of seedlings in a transplant bed and got good control of a species of grub we don't currently have in Christmas trees, the Oriental beetle grub (*Exomala orientalis*). However, several growers are trying this when resetting trees in fields with previous grub damage to see if it will protect these trees from also being damaged.

ELONGATED HEMLOCK SCALE. Elongate hemlock scale continues to slowly spread in areas of Yancey, Watauga, and Ashe counties. Last year, I monitored when eggs and crawlers of the scale were present. Eggs can almost always be found under the protective scale covering of the female. However, in June when the new growth is coming out on the trees, crawlers are moving up onto it. That may be a good time to make a first dimethoate treatment with a second about 2 to 3 weeks later. Anyone who suspects they have elongate hemlock scale should let their county extension agent know so that we can monitor spread and help with its control.

There is a new product on the market for scale control that I hope to try this year against the elongate hemlock scale. Its name is Talus and it is marketed by SePro.

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SUDDEN OAK DEATH. Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*. Though mainly affecting certain species of oaks, it can also infect many other plant species. There are concerns about bringing potential host species such as rhododendron and camellias to North Carolina from out west. However, all fir species have been shown to be potential weak hosts. Therefore the possibility exists for bringing this disease to North Carolina on Christmas tree seedlings. Though no fir species is currently a regulated host, and only grand fir (*Abies grandis*) is recognized as a related species, it is still important for North Carolina Christmas tree growers to be aware that this pest could become a problem.

SCOUTING. Insect pests in general haven't been as bad since we started to get some rain last year. This is because

trees are not under as much stress and can outgrow much of the pest damage. Also, survival of many pests such as spider mites is reduced in wet weather. This could all change if we hit a dry spell, so don't forget to keep scouting!

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service in your county.



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As part of the national promotion, NCCTA purchased ads in the June, July, and August issues of Plant & Supply Locator and in the July, August, and September issues of both American Nurseryman and Garden Center Merchandising & Management. These combined advertising efforts resulted in a 21% to 69 % (average 49.2%) increase in phone calls to the NCCTA office from July-December compared to the previous year for the same time period. During this same six-month period website visits were up an average of 29.7% over the previous year with 24,853 visits in November alone. More

than 1500 Buy/Sell Guides were mailed as a result. Both the Buy/Sell Guide and the Choose & Cut Guide were available for download from the website.

Magnets and brochures were distributed at trade shows, to lodging facilities, to professional agricultural agents at their national convention, and to educators who wanted to talk about real Christmas trees in their classrooms.

Every facet of this campaign promoted the NCCTA website and toll-free number.

PHONE CALLS: 2002 Compared to 2003

Month	Number of Calls 2002	Number of Calls 2003	Increase
July	187	308	121=64.7%
August	238	314	76=31.9%
September	330	398	68=20.6%
October	278	469	191=68.7%
November	309	514	205=66.3%
December	509	758	249=48.9%
Total	1851	2761	910=49.2%

WEBSITE: Hits 2002 Compared to Visits 2003*

Month	Number of 2002 Hits	Number of 2003 Visits	Increase
July	2204	2778	574=26.0%
August	2477	3256	779=31.4%
September	3213	4671	1458=45.4%
October	4652	7606	2954=63.5%
November	20563	24853	4290=20.9%
December	12597	16119	3522=28.0%
Total	45706	59283	13577=29.7%

* The reason for hits as compared to visits is that NCCTA changed hosting services in early 2003 and data reporting was different.

