BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELgid (HWA):

Although there is much excitement about the release of the sassie beetle as a biological control for the Hemlock Wooly Adelgid (HWA), the research on their effectiveness and other factors as to their release is ongoing. Therefore any statements as to the beetles effectiveness in controlling the current level of HWA infestation cannot be made with certainty. In fact many in the research community are hesitant to recommend beetle releases for single trees or individual yards due to the many variables and the expense involved. Many public and private entities are releasing predator insects in larger stands of infested hemlocks where chemical control is impractical. Ongoing evaluation of these sites as well as ongoing research in hemlock genetics etc. will hopefully lead to improved strategies to save and reintroduce hemlocks in the eastern United States.

Recommendations are as follows:

- Evaluate Hemlock trees on your property as to overall health (physical damage, other diseases and insects etc.), location (near a building where dead trees may become a hazard), value to the landscape (aesthetics, screening etc.) and the expense to remove the trees if they die.

- Only treat when you have confirmed an active HWA infestation on your trees

- Evaluate the expense of treatment options; chemical sprays, drenches, soil injections, trunk treatments, and biological controls (Sassie beetles) AND dead tree removal if left untreated.

- Consider using chemical treatments on high value trees at least until the effectiveness of the biological controls and other factors can be verified.

- Chemical treatment on selected trees can be done in conjunction with beetle releases only if you have other untreated but infested hemlocks on your property where you can release the beetles. DO NOT release beetles onto chemically treated trees! REMEMBER beetles may move from location to location so there is no guarantee that the beetles you purchase will remain on your trees.

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