

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## The Threat of the Hemlock

The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), a native of Asia, is a 1/32-inch-long reddish-purple insect that lives within its own protective coating. White, woolly masses that shelter these sap-feeding insects are at the bases of hemlock needles along infested branches. The presence of these white sacs, which resemble tiny cotton balls, indicate that a tree is infested. HWA is a threat to eastern hemlock forests, and eastern and Carolina hemlock of all sizes are susceptible. In addition, ornamental plantings in urban settings are equally susceptible.

**RC&D**  
**Frank Riley**  
Executive Director



HWA feeding reduces new shoot growth, and causes grayish-green foliage, premature needle drop, thinned crowns, branch tip dieback, and eventual tree death. Homeowners and private landowners have two treatment options: 1) spray foliage with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil at the proper times during the HWA life cycle, or 2) use a systemic insecticide that moves with the tree sap and is consumed by the adelgids as they feed. Several brands of insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils are available at garden centers or from retail stores that sell pesticides. These are contact insecticides that must thoroughly cover the insects to kill them so the foliage, twigs, and branches must be sprayed almost to runoff. Neither product leaves a toxic residue so several applications may be needed. The soaps and oils can be applied to small trees with pump-up garden sprayers, but power sprayers are needed to treat larger trees. If coverage is not thorough or trees are too tall for the equipment that is available, surviving HWA soon will reinfest the trees. These applications will be most effective only during two treatment windows when stages of the HWA that do not have a protective covering are active.

One is following egg hatch from March through April, the other is from September to October. Read the product label carefully before purchasing and applying insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. In some cases, there will be precautions against spraying when temperatures are above or below certain limits, on windy days, or in late spring when the new growth is present on the tree and has not hardened to the dark shade of green.

Insecticidal soaps and horticultural oils can be used in sensitive sites near houses, creeks, or ponds without risk to non-target organisms or the environment. Foliar sprays with other insecticides can be effective but some pose risks to the environment. Systemic insecticides containing the active ingredient imidacloprid can be used as soil drenches or injections to control the HWA. Brand names include Bayer Tree & Shrub Insect Control Concentrate or Merit Insecticide. Imidacloprid, which is very soluble in water, is taken up by tree roots and moved in the sap to sites where the adelgids are feeding. This approach eliminates the problem of spray coverage, especially on trees that are too tall to treat using available equipment. This treatment should be applied during spring (mid-March to early June) and fall (mid-September to mid-November). The ground should not be frozen or waterlogged but the soil should be moist.

Research indicates that the treatment requires at least 30 days to be taken up by the tree, but it can kill adelgids for about 24 months. Homeowners with infested hemlocks may consider soil treatments if HWA has been reported in their county. There is no preemptive treatment for the hemlock adelgid. An understanding of the HWA life cycle is useful because foliar sprays are most effective when the newly hatched "crawler" stage is active. Egg laying begins early, before the first wildflowers bloom in early spring. Small reddish-brown nymphs (also called crawlers) that hatch from groups of up to 300 eggs in March either disperse from the tree or settle near the base of needles, sink their sucking mouthparts into twigs, and begin to feed on sap. The crawlers have a distinctive white fringe around their sides, their white protective covering is secreted later. Adelgids without the covering are very susceptible to contact with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. These adelgids mature over the next few weeks and lay 50 to 200 eggs that will hatch in mid-April to early May. These crawlers are present during the spring flush of hemlock foliage. They settle on new growth and are inactive during the summer. Development resumes in September and partially grown HWA spend the winter on tree branches and twigs covered by the white woolly material that they secrete. Development resumes in late winter and continues until March when these adelgids mature and begin the two generation per year life cycle again. In one year a single adelgid female could produce 90,000 offspring. HWA was first reported in the eastern US in Virginia in the mid 1950's. Since then, it has spread north to Connecticut and south through North Carolina and into Georgia. The infested area expands at the rate of about 15 miles per year. HWA can be blown by winds, carried by birds and other wildlife, and moved on infested nursery stock. It produces several generations per year and has an extremely high reproductive potential (up to 300 eggs per female) so numbers can increase rapidly in a short time.

Young Harris College has a long time adelgid predator beetle rearing lab and reports success in beetle releases in our forests. For more information check out <https://www.yhc.edu/academics/math-science/hemlock-project>

## Towns County Community Calendar

<b>First Monday of each month:</b> School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8 am
<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
Water Board... Water Office	6 pm



## A Wise Man Walks

"Watch where you put your feet." Excellent advice for an area prone to the surprise slither of rattlesnakes and copperheads when you least expect them. It was advice often repeated by my father as we were growing up, and I knew where he heard it for the first time the day my laughing grandfather said it word for word when I planted my feet in the middle of a steaming pile of something recently extruded by a cow.

I'm confident my grandfather heard it from his own father as a child as he farmed the same rocks and roots, stepped over the same logs and walked barefoot in the same tall grass and shady, hidden places.

People spend hundreds of dollars and more to meditate and learn to "focus their awareness," but all you have to do is take off your shoes and walk across a field knowing that something scaly might also be enjoying the afternoon sun.

"A wise man walks with his head bowed, humble like the dust" says the fictional hero. That's good advice as far as it goes, but if you adhere to that counsel here in these mountains you might bang your head on a tree limb or worse, a hornet's nest, if you don't glance up as well.

And that's precisely why I like walking off the beaten path. You watch where you put your feet. You give a keen eye to eye-level. You watch where you put your hands, because the vine you're using to pull yourself up the slope might break you out in itchy red blisters.

All the senses are engaged. You hear the conversations of birds and the ebullience of falling water, the gossip of squirrels and the warning of crows. You smell the richness of the leaf mould and the sharpness of a ramp or wild onion. A breeze touches your face, and cold creek water cools your brow. When you walk the woods properly you experience the total information awareness that bureaucrats dream of and artists take for granted.

Better still, with the senses engaged and the mind focused on each passing moment, time slows down. The constant chatter of internal dialogue ceases. The incessant noise of assessment, comparison, judgment, and worry becomes silent.

I've heard it said that we've all but lost the ability to appreciate the natural world in such a way, and that we're losing the ability to focus, to concentrate for an extended period of time. We live in a state of constant distraction.

I'm not sure we've lost the ability as much as we have diverted it. We still have our artists and athletes, and a few remaining craftsmen. We may not be able to read and comprehend a compound sentence or follow an extended chain of reasoning, but we can focus for hours on a video game.

It has been said that we're simply adapting to a world of rapid change and advancing technology, and the adaptations for a world made by hand are no longer needed. I cannot agree. As long as we live on this earth, we are creatures of it. We are not yet virtual machines with disembodied brains.

We may not need all of the skills and adaptations of our ancestors, but we should stop short of considering ourselves superior to them. With all of our technological advancement, our grandparents slept better than we do, and when I see the number of cars parked at the trailheads every weekend, I know I'm not alone in suspecting that the ancestors knew things it would behoove us to remember.

## Letters To The Editor

Re: "Clyde Misleads Us Again"

Dear Editor,

Calling a letter writer's bluff from last week, I pored through all 320 pages of U.S. House Bill 2811, The Limit, Save, Grow Act, to find the cuts to Veterans and Social Security funds mentioned.

Exhausting on a smartphone. I've expedited my cataract surgery.

There are provisions for restoration of work requirements for able-bodied, age-appropriate Medicaid and other welfare recipients.

President Clinton and Newt Gingrich famously and successfully enacted similar requirements back in the '90s.

These did not hamper single-parent families or otherwise needy recipients.

That did result in savings on the welfare expenditures but, alas, they were also famously removed by President Obama for no particular reason.

Allowing a bloated current 2023 budget through but insisting on a return to last year's bloated spending only makes sense. That's called belt-tightening. Every family and business has done that, especially in the past three years.

And the bill probably ain't going to fly through the Leftist Senate or White House anyway.

It's called an opening bid.

And, as much as the Left harp on it, no Republican is going to touch the "third rail" of cuts to Social Security or to Veterans.

It would be suicide at voting time. Ain't even being discussed, I guarantee you. Right up there with the now-debunked Russian Collusion hoaxes.

That's why, as recommended, I don't take the writer's word on them.

J. Murray Tarter

## Leyland Cypress

Leyland cypress trees are a very common and popular landscaping plant. They are planted by people all over Georgia. However, there are a couple of issues that are commonly seen in Leyland cypress trees. Let's talk about Leyland cypress trees, what some of those issues are, and what steps you can take to reduce the chances of your Leyland cypress getting diseased, because recently I have gotten a lot of calls from people with questions on their Leyland cypress trees.

**UGA**  
Extension  
UNION COUNTY  
**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



The biggest issue that people have right now is that their trees are turning yellow and brown on the inside. This is due to the mild winter that we had earlier in the year. Leyland cypress trees prefer a climate that is colder than what we have in the Georgia Mountains. When plants don't have the climatic conditions that they prefer it makes them much more prone to stress. The tree's natural response is to start to drop the needles that are closest to the trunk. These needles turn yellow and then brown before falling off. The best thing to do if you see this happening is to make sure that you are watering your trees during a dry spell. Leyland cypresses have a shallow root system, which makes them prone to drought stress.

Another thing to keep in mind is that these trees have an effective lifespan of 15-20 years. So, if your trees are that age and don't look healthy, they probably aren't going to improve significantly.

The two canker diseases that Leyland cypress trees get are Seiridium and Botryosphaeria canker. Seiridium canker is the most common and destructive of the two in Georgia. The symptoms from both diseases look very similar. You will see individual branches begin to die off. Sometimes you'll see resin in spots on the branches because of the cankers. These cankers are essentially suffocating the branch, leading to the branch turning brown. Once a tree has been infected the best treatment is to remove the dead branch and dispose of the branch.

Stressed trees are going to be more susceptible to cankers. During times of drought, trees that are already infected will spread the disease much more quickly. Ice damage and spring freezes can create wounds where infection is able to occur. Trees that are near buildings that reflect sunlight will also be more stressed. Unfortunately, with canker diseases there is not a fungicide that can be used to eliminate the pathogen.

Passalora needle blight has become more common as well. This is a disease that will cause the needles to drop off of the tree, working its way up to the top. It is possible to spray for passalora, but it is not practical. The spray must be applied to the whole tree multiple times a year. If you have a 40 foot tall tree, that is very difficult.

Try to keep plants from becoming stressed by laying mulch around their base. This will increase the moisture retained by the soil, and suppress competitive weed growth. During dry, hot summer days, water the trees if the soil has become dry. If trees are extensively damaged by cankers or needle blight, then they will need to be removed. When planting Leyland cypress make sure to dig out an area 3-4 times larger than the diameter of the root ball. This will improve soil drainage, resulting in your trees being less stressed and less susceptible to root rot diseases. In addition, plant trees at least 15 feet apart. A common issue is that Leyland Cypresses are planted very close together to make a better screen. This also invites disease and increases the rate of decline.

There are some alternatives to Leyland cypress trees that are better adapted to our environment. Green Giant arborvitae and Arizona cypresses are both trees that serve the same purpose in landscape and are more disease resistant. For anyone planting trees as a barrier or screen, I would encourage them to look into these alternatives.

If you have questions about Leyland cypress please contact your county Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Biden Crime Family

The walls are closing in on the Biden Crime Family.

House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Chairman James Comer recently held a newsworthy press conference detailing the Committee's investigation into the Biden family's influence peddling and foreign business schemes. Over the last few months, the Oversight Committee has obtained and reviewed thousands of pages of financial records. In short, these records reveal how the Biden family and their associates created a network of companies during Joe Biden's vice presidency — as well as how these companies raked in millions of dollars from foreign nationals. To cover their tracks, the Bidens used complicated transactions between multiple shell companies to hide these hefty foreign payments.

In sum, the Bidens' web of more than 20 companies received over \$10 million from foreign nationals. That gives more than 10 million reasons as to why now-President Joe Biden is compromised.

The Oversight Committee's evidence unveiled a corrupt influence peddling scheme, because the Bidens didn't provide goods or services to foreign nationals in exchange for these pricey payments — they could only offer access and influence. Troublingly, the Committee's breakdown of these bombshell transactions includes both Chinese and Romanian nationals and companies.

I think it's now safe to say that Joe Biden is the most corrupt president in U.S. history.

While the Committee continues investigating the Bidens' financial records and waiting for additional subpoenaed materials, this probe should alarm every solitary American — no matter their political stripes. Rest assured, House Republicans are determined to uncover the truth and deliver accountability to the American people. I look forward to updating you on this critical matter as the Oversight Committee's investigation moves forward.

The Towns County Herald is an independent and non-partisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

United States Congressman  
**Representative Andrew Clyde**



## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

**Kenneth West** Owner/Publisher  
**Shawn Jarrard** General Manager/Editor  
**Derek Richards** Advertising Director  
**Jordan Hyatt** Office Manager

**Todd Forrest** Staff Writer  
**Lowell Nicholson** Photographer

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 3 "The Mall", Hiawassee  
Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto:tcherald@windstream.net)  
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546