

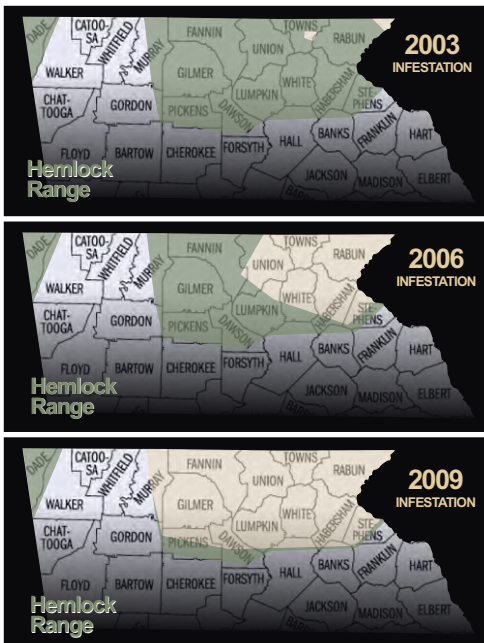
The Future of Blackberry's Hemlocks Is In Our Hands



The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, an aphid-like insect, less 1/32" long, lays eggs semi-annually in white cottony sacs. After hatching, the HWA attaches to the base of the hemlock's needles where it sucks the sap. **Unless treated, the HWA will kill every hemlock in Blackberry Mountain.**

The HWA arrived in Georgia in 2003 and has infected the state's hemlock range at an unprecedented rate. The HWA is spread primarily by birds, deer, wildlife, wind, man and the transplanting of infected hemlocks. Most of the hemlocks in Rabun and Towns counties are already dead. **At this rate, Blackberry's hemlocks will be dead within 5-6 years.**

In addition to the obvious environmental value to wildlife and



plants, hemlocks are an integral part of protecting our ponds and river. Their extensive root systems prevent bank erosion, protect water quality and prevent build-up of harmful bacteria. The loss of hemlocks will reduce shade, thereby raising the water temperatures and damaging the entire aquatic ecosystem. **A rise in the Cartecay's temperature will make the river uninhabitable for many of its current species.**

Several negative outcomes can be expected if we lose our hemlocks:

- Build-up of dead and dying trees
- Decline of aesthetic value
- Loss of privacy
- Risk of personal injury
- Damage to property
- Increased soil erosion
- Increased fire hazard
- Rise of invasive plant species
- Decline in property values

What Can We Do?

The most environmentally-friendly and cost effective method for treating our hemlocks against the woolly adelgid is chemical control. If we can act before our hemlocks begin to decline, soil-injected Imidacloprid is the preferred treatment. Imidacloprid is a neonicotinoid, systemic insecticide used in household bug killers and pet flea control products.

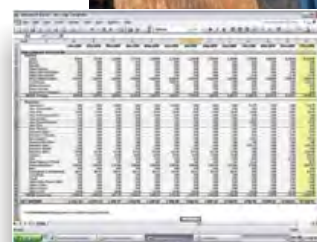
When used properly, Imidacloprid is a safe product for humans, wildlife, plants and our ponds and river. An on-going USFS study of treated trees within 50 feet of streams shows that only trace amounts of Imidacloprid enter the streams - not enough to impact aquatic organisms, and it has no effect on macroinvertebrates. **Imidacloprid has been used throughout the Appalachian mountains with no ill effects.**



If Blackberry's hemlocks are to be saved, the most reasonable approach is to develop a plan for treating the hemlocks throughout the larger community. Plans are underway to engage associations and property owners along the Cartecay River (and throughout Gilmer County) to adopt treatment programs.

The first step for us is to inventory all of the hemlocks in Blackberry. Once this database is created, then the various treatment costs can be determined. If the association members decide to save Blackberry's hemlocks, then a treatment protocol and schedule can be established.

This year, Blackberry's common areas will be inventoried, and, as budgeted funds allow, selected hemlocks will be treated. It is also possible to begin an inventory of all of the hemlocks on Blackberry owners' properties. But the association members



What You Can Do Now

- Keep your hemlocks healthy
- Don't encourage birds to feed or roost in your hemlocks
- Don't feed deer and other wildlife on your property
- Don't transplant hemlocks
- Don't plant nursery-grown hemlocks into your landscape
- Notify your facilitator if you find HWA on your hemlocks