

INFORMATION STATEMENT:

4/29/09

SOIL INJECTION OF IMIDACLOPRID ON HEMLOCKS POSES MINIMAL RISK TO HONEYBEES

Some concern has been expressed by certain environmental groups and scientific organizations about the possible effects of the chemical Imidacloprid on honeybees. Because this is the primary product used to treat Hemlocks for the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (the invasive insect pest that is killing these trees) and because Save Georgia's Hemlocks recommends the use of Imidacloprid by soil injection and other methods to save the Hemlocks, we want to make a clear statement about its use.

We have been advised that the use of Imidacloprid for treatment of Hemlock trees by soil injection poses minimal risk to honeybees. The treatment solution is injected at a depth of four to six inches below the surface of the ground very close to the base of the Hemlock, so it is not dispersed into the air or onto the surface of plants or placed in the root zones of other trees. It binds to the organic matter in the soil quickly and only moves into the surrounding soil a few inches from the injection site (according to the U.S. Forest Service). The solution is taken up by the tree's roots and distributed through all parts of the tree for total systemic protection. And since Hemlocks are wind pollinated, soil injection of Imidacloprid for treatment of HWA is unlikely to affect insects that pollinate flowering plants.

Save Georgia's Hemlocks is sensitive to concerns about the possible effects of Imidacloprid on our environment and uses care in its application. And while we sincerely hope for, and actively support, the development of a natural, biological solution (such as the predatory beetles currently being raised by three labs in Georgia for release on public lands), at present the only control option that provides both a high degree of effectiveness and long-term protection for Hemlocks on private property is treatment with Imidacloprid. We recognize that it is a temporary "band-aid," but we believe it will buy these magnificent trees time until a viable natural solution is found and can be implemented in sufficient quantity.

Note that the use of any chemical in a manner that is inconsistent with the product label is prohibited. Always read and follow product label instructions.