

Celebrate Arbor Day 2016 by Learning to Save Hemlocks

by Donna Shearer, Chairman, Save Georgia's Hemlocks

Arbor Day, traditionally celebrated in Georgia on the third Friday of February, is a day set aside to reflect on the importance of trees. They contribute to the beauty, privacy, and value of our individual properties and our neighborhoods; cover our mountains with lush forests, which support thousands of jobs related to tourism and recreation, and produce millions of dollars in revenue; provide food and habitat for many birds and animals, shade for native plants, and cool temperatures for trout streams; help maintain the biodiversity of the ecosystem and protect the air and water quality we depend on; and create special places that restore our bodies and refresh our spirits.

But Arbor Day is more than a time for reflection. It's also a time for action to save one of our most majestic and iconic evergreen trees. The hemlocks are being attacked and killed by the millions by a tiny invasive insect, the hemlock woolly adelgid, that was accidentally imported from Asia to the eastern U. S. more than 60 years ago and now infests the entire Appalachian chain. The bad news – the massive loss of the hemlock would be a disaster on the scale of the American Chestnut.

The good news – property owners can treat and save as many of their own trees as they choose. It's safe, easy enough for most people to do themselves, highly effective, and surprisingly economical, especially compared to the cost of losing the trees. And volunteers can help save the hemlocks in our national forests and state lands too.

Several training classes and volunteer service events for treating hemlocks are being held this spring. If you want to learn how to help, please visit www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Schedule_of_Events.htm, call 706-429-8010, or call 706-429-8010 for information.

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Save Georgia's Hemlocks is a 100% volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to preserving, conserving, and restoring endangered hemlocks through education and charitable service.

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