

Help for hemlocks available

The Hemlock Help for Homeowners program kicked off Wednesday in Rabun County, where the infestation of the hemlock woolly adelgid began in Georgia.

The program focuses on enhancing public awareness of the woolly adelgid problem and practical solutions that are available. It also aims to enable homeowners to save hemlocks on their property for the lowest possible cost.

The spreading infestation of the hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive insect native to Asia with no local natural predator, has threatened hemlocks for several years. Hemlock stands are among the only old growth forests in the east and are of great importance to wildlife, water quality, local economy and basic quality of life.

The program is being implemented in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, University of Georgia Extension Service, local conservation and

recreational organizations and homeowners associations in various counties.

Homeowners can call the Hemlock Help Line at 706-429-8010 with their questions and receive accurate, up-to-date information and advice. For individuals interested in the do-it-yourself option, the help line can provide information on borrowing a soil injector.

The public is invited to a free hemlock clinic at 10 a.m. Saturday, July 11, at the extension office, 41 Jo Dotson Circle, suite 1, in Clayton.