



The woolly adelgid has decimated Shenandoah's hemlocks.
NPS Photo



NPS staff member is treating an eastern hemlock tree with a pesticide injected into the soil near the roots.
NPS Photo

Forests Under Siege by Exotic Insects & Disease

Humans have introduced a wide array of exotic insects and diseases into eastern forests over the past century. Here in Shenandoah National Park, we have seen the chestnut blight, gypsy moth, dogwood anthracnose, and hemlock woolly adelgid cause significant changes in the forest's composition and health. Because these forest pest species are exotic (they exist outside of their natural range), the park staff strive to control them. Currently, Shenandoah is battling the tiny hemlock woolly adelgid and treating roughly 1300 eastern hemlock trees per year with a pesticide injected into the soil near the roots. Left unchecked, this Asian adelgid threatens to kill virtually all of the park's hemlocks. However, park scientists are committed to saving a lasting remnant of this important species for future recovery or restoration.

Scientific studies are underway to identify new approaches to control exotic insects and diseases.

YOU CAN HELP limit the spread of non-native species by cleaning camping gear, hiking boots, and horse trailers before coming to the park. You are also encouraged to use firewood from local sources rather than transporting it from home.



The park is taking steps towards preventing the spread of the emerald ash borer into Shenandoah National Park by encouraging visitors to not transport firewood into the park.
Illustration/Michigan State University, USDA Forest Service