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Kern/Tulare

GWSS Update



A project of the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties. Participants: Agricultural Commissioner's Offices of Kern and Tulare Counties, California Department of Food and Agriculture, University of California-Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture (APHIS and ARS Divisions).

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Building a barrier to GWSS

A screen barrier is being developed as a tactic to impede the movement of the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) into vineyards or plant nurseries.

Matthew Blua and Rick Redak of the University of California-Riverside and David Morgan of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) are spearheading the research.

"The screen barrier appears to be a worthwhile management tactic against GWSS in nursery yards and vineyards," Blua says.

The 5-meter-tall screen effectively prevents GWSS from entering the nursery, since nearly all adult sharpshooters fly lower than the top of the barrier, fly away from it, and do not walk or fly over it if placed on it.

"The barrier tactic can compliment insecticide tactics and biocontrol, and is consistent with area-wide and local management strategies," says Blua. "The barrier only impacts the point of use and is environmentally sound. It does not contaminate groundwater or annoy neighbors."

The barriers are fabricated from steel posts supported by cables. The screens are made of 60 percent shade cloth and supported on the posts with wire.

"The initial cost of erecting a barrier is high, but if well constructed, it should last long," Blua says. "The high value of nursery stock and vineyards per unit-area makes them amenable to a relatively expensive management tactic."

Strict regulations have been imposed on California's high-value nursery industry to curtail GWSS movement via nursery stock transported to non-infested counties. As a result, plants destined for transport must be thoroughly inspected for any stage of GWSS, and treated with an insecticide if warranted.

Sharpshooter egg masses are particularly difficult to detect, and resist treat-



ment with insecticides. Inspections and treatments are labor-intensive and time consuming, resulting in additional costs to growers and county agricultural commissioners' offices. Some growers in GWSS-infested areas have stopped shipping product to non-infested areas rather than risk a shipment rejection after transit.

Looking ahead, Blua sees the need for demonstration projects where the screen barrier encloses an entire nursery, rather than just one side of it, as during his research. He's hoping CDFA can help provide the funding.

"We also need regulatory and commercial acceptance of a strategy that includes a barrier tactic with other tactics, including insecticides, in lieu of expensive nursery site inspections," he says.

Also worthwhile, he adds, is identifying nursery plants that are most likely to transport GWSS. Such plants could be enclosed to prevent sharpshooter movement. He and his colleagues will be studying this as well as "the judicious use of insecticides to induce mortality and curtail oviposition." No effective insecticide is currently available that kills GWSS eggs.

You can reach Blua at matthew.blua@ucr.edu.

In recent research, a screen barrier 5 meters—or 16.4 feet—tall helped keep GWSS from migrating from a nearby citrus grove into a Fillmore, Calif., nursery. (Photo: Matthew Blua)

'05-'06 assessment holds at \$2

CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura June 30 approved the recommendation by the PD/GWSS Board to maintain the 2005-06 grower assessment at \$2 per \$1,000 of value for winegrape sales.