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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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## Temecula Valley's PD concerns escalate with increasing GWSS levels

With the still-painful memory of sharpshooter calamity in the late 1990s, Temecula Valley vineyard and winery owner Peter Poole is feeling a little nervous these days.

This summer's counts of glassy-winged sharpshooters (GWSS) in the Riverside County winegrape-growing region reached their highest levels since 2000, prompted in large part by higher-than-normal temperatures in March and April.

While the majority of the area's growers were not affected by the rise in the pest's populations, Poole says, the GWSS increases "have heightened everybody's awareness.

"We're all more vigilant," says Poole, president of both the Temecula Winegrape Growers Association and Mount Palomar Winery in Temecula. "I think we were all getting a little relaxed."

GWSS populations caught just in monitoring program traps in the Temecula Valley peaked at nearly 700 sharpshooters in July. "The actual population is inestimably higher," Poole says.

The highest numbers of GWSS, an average of 10 per trap, were found in organic orchards or citrus not treated with synthetic insecticides such as Admire®. Poole says the findings were mostly in the southeast part of the valley, not in the northwest section where the majority of wineries and about half of the vineyards are located.

Between February and June of this year, 580 acres of citrus in the Temecula Valley were treated for the pest. Admire and Assail® were the two major insecticides used. Under a GWSS area-wide management program, citrus growers are eligible for reimbursement for treating their groves against the sharpshooter. The treatments took place under a cooperative agreement with USDA's APHIS Division and the River-



side Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

"Plans are to continue to monitor the population levels of GWSS and do fall and spring treatments as necessary," says Bob Mulherin, deputy agricultural commissioner for Riverside County.

### Managing to prevent "disaster."

Increasing GWSS populations in the Temecula Valley highlight the "real need to continue an area-wide GWSS/PD management program to prevent an economic disaster" for the area's businesses and work force that depend on local vineyards, says Dr. Nick Toscano, entomologist with the University of California-Riverside.

The Temecula Valley and the Coachella Valley, about 60 miles away, encompass 28,000 acres where citrus groves interface with vineyards. In the Temecula Valley, 2,000 acres of wine grapes sit in close proximity to 1,600 acres of citrus. The Coachella Valley has about 12,000 acres of table grapes near 12,000 acres of citrus. Both valleys are vulnerable to Pierce's disease (PD).

Toscano urges Temecula vineyard owners to be especially vigilant next spring in monitoring for GWSS.

Like neighboring grape growers, Poole says he'll be studying the environment

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*Vineyard owners in the Temecula Valley will be on guard for the return of GWSS next spring. (Photo: Temecula Valley Winegrape Growers Association)*

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Peter Poole, president of the Temecula Winegrape Growers Association



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around his vineyards to see what he can do to prevent a return of GWSS. The Mount Palomar estate grows grapes on 172 acres, producing mixed wine-grape varieties from 45 of those acres.

"We'll be paying more attention to the eucalyptus growing on our property," Poole says.

Eucalyptus is a known host of GWSS.

**Temecula's grim GWSS history.**

In the late 1990s, GWSS and PD caused a 30-percent vineyard loss and "almost brought Temecula's wine-growing region to its knees," Toscano says.

Mount Palomar Winery was among the vineyard operations "hit very hard in 1999," Poole remembers. Back then, the operation grew 31 acres of citrus and 92 acres of grapes. By 2000, Poole had removed all the citrus and had lost about 40 percent of his vineyards.

The Temecula area, located in southwest Riverside County, generates \$100 million annually from its wine grape and connecting tourist industries.

"An area-wide GWSS management program initiated in the spring of 2000 saved the industry from a 100-percent loss," Toscano notes. "Only a continuation of an area-wide GWSS management program will keep the vineyards viable in Temecula.

"Citrus is an important year-round reproductive host of GWSS in Riverside County," he adds, "but also one that concentrates GWSS populations over the winter months during the time that grapes and many ornamental hosts are dormant."

**Coachella also on watch.** GWSS population increases in the Coachella Valley over the last three years have increased the danger of PD occurrence. In July 2002, the

