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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Agriculture officials are working to stop the spread of an invasive evergreen tree-feeding insect, after it was discovered in holiday decorations sold at big box stores.

The warning comes after state inspectors found Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS) — invasive insects native to Asia that steal nutrients from conifers when they feed on the underside of their needles — on many decorations like wreaths, swags, boughs, evergreen bough arrangements, hanging baskets, porch pots, mugs and sleighs sold at Menards, Home Depot and other large retailers across the state. The stores, all part of major chains that had infected products received them from suppliers in North Carolina, the department said. Inspectors did not find the bug on Christmas trees. Stores have cooperated and destroyed any affected products, according to DATCP. It's unclear if other chain or independent stores have sold or received infested products, the department said.



A microscopic view of EHS

Several local news outlets have suggested to put the holiday tree in plastic bags and place in the refuse for collection. The City of Sun Prairie does not have a contract with a refuse company to pick up the trees curbside or have a good method to dispose of Christmas trees in plastic bags.

To minimize the handling and possible spread of this invasive species, the City of Sun Prairie Public Works and Forestry is asking residents to dispose of Holiday decorations by following these steps:

- Place evergreen wreaths, swags, boughs, and arrangements of evergreens in plastic garbage bags and put in the refuse cart.
- Do not bag the tree. The tree can be placed curbside for collection. The trees will be brought to the recycle center and burned to eradicate the elongated hemlock scale.
- Trees will be collected curbside starting on January 7 and January 22.

**Residents may bring the tree to the Recycle Center. It will be disposed of with the trees collected.**

Recycle Center Winter Hours:  
Monday: 3 – 5pm  
Saturday: 9am - Noon

*If trees are not placed out for collection by the 2nd collection date (January 22), residents are responsible for disposal. We will not collect late set outs.*

**Please follow these simple rules for holiday tree collection:**

- Set out by 7 a.m.
- Trees should be placed curbside with the cut end facing the street for collection.
- Everything should be removed from the tree (ornaments, lights, wires, garland, tinsel, etc.).
- Wreaths and rope materials, due to their wire content should be placed in your refuse cart for collection.
- Please keep tree(s) clear of snow.

The crews collect city-wide beginning on those days. Depending on the number of trees out and size of crew we have collecting, it can take several days to complete. If weather conditions require, crews will be diverted from tree collection to clear snow or rain as it is a potential safety concern. Please be patient and we will get out to you.

**For more information about Elongate Hemlock Scale:**

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/EHS.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/EHS.aspx)

**Some of the information in this bulletin was obtained from the following resources:**

[State of Wisconsin, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection](#)

[USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, Forest Health Protection](#)

[Wisconsin State Journal, December 27, 2018](#)

[Channel 3000. Com, WISC TV, New 3, Madison](#)