

# Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Buy local to avoid invasive plant pests in your holiday evergreen decorations

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding consumers to check for possible invasive pests before purchasing holiday décor. In previous years, plant health inspectors have intercepted evergreen decorations infested with invasive insects hitching a ride into Wisconsin from other states. For example, the invasive pest elongate hemlock scale (EHS) was previously found on fir wreaths, Christmas trees, baskets, and boughs from eastern states. EHS is a threat to Wisconsin's Christmas trees, native hemlock, and balsam fir forests.

“Since pests like EHS have never been found on the landscape in Wisconsin, the best way to avoid these invasive pests is to make sure your tree or wreath was grown in a state without EHS – like Wisconsin or other states further to the west,” said Brian Kuhn, DATCP's Bureau of Plant Industry director.

You can help protect Wisconsin's natural resources and Christmas tree industry by checking trees and wreaths for this pest. To identify EHS, look for discolored needles and small brown, oblong scale insects on the underside of the needles. If you suspect EHS on fir wreaths or Christmas trees, please report it to DATCP's pest hotline at (866) 440-7523 and if possible, email a clear, close-up picture to [datcppesthotline@wi.gov](mailto:datcppesthotline@wi.gov).

To learn more about EHS, visit [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/-Programs\\_Services/EHS.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/-Programs_Services/EHS.aspx).

Wisconsin is home to more than 850 Christmas tree farms that sell trees, garlands, and bows. A list of cut-your-own and retail lots is available from the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association at <https://www.christmastrees-wi.org/>.

### **About the Bureau of Plant Industry**

DATCP's Bureau of Plant Industry licenses about 2,000 nurseries and Christmas tree farms annually. The bureau works to control serious plant pests, diseases, and exotic species that threaten Wisconsin's crops, forests, and plant communities.