

2025 Nursery Certification and Plant Pest Regulatory Annual Report

Plant Protection Division

Prepared December 2025

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Background

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is responsible for the administration of the Nursery Law ([Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 18H](#)) and Plant Protection and Export Certification ([Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 18G](#)). The purpose is to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful plant pests and diseases within the state. To support this goal, nursery stock produced for sale in Minnesota must be inspected annually and certified before it can be sold or distributed. Nursery stock originating outside Minnesota must be officially certified at the point of origin and comply with all applicable quarantines.

The Nursery Certification and Plant Regulation Program provide a vital service to the nursery industry and protects consumers from purchasing problems. Annual inspections reduce losses by identifying issues early and recommending corrective actions before serious damage occurs. Certified nursery stock can move freely within the United States, and special certificates are issued for export. A standard of quality is maintained to ensure both the industry and consumers that the product they purchase is healthy and viable.

Anyone selling nursery stock in Minnesota must have a valid Minnesota Live Plant Dealer Nursery Certificate. Sellers are required to offer only Certified Nursery Stock and must provide documentation verifying the certification for all stock offered for sale.

Nursery Stock Certificates

In previous years, the MDA Nursery Certification Program issued two types of nursery stock certificates. Beginning with the 2025 season, the two certificate types were combined into one. All nursery certificate holders are now considered Live Plant Dealers. Tables 1 and 2 reflect this change in certificate type.

A Live Plant Dealer means an entity that raises, grows, or propagates nursery stock for sale, either outdoors or indoors; acquires and further distributes nursery stock, including through landscaping or distribution with a tree spade; or operates a business in Minnesota that sells nursery stock with or without taking ownership or handling the nursery stock. Nursery stock includes trees, shrubs, vines, perennials, biennials, grafts, cuttings, and buds.

Many certificate holders both grow nursery stock and sell finished stock purchased from other sources. A single certificate type simplifies participation in the program and establishes one fee schedule for all program participants.

The MDA first worked with the Nursery Advisory Group, comprised of Minnesota nursery industry stakeholders, to vet this change to the program. The MDA then proposed the changes to Minnesota Statutes, 18H during the 2023 legislative session, and the language was passed without opposition.

Table 1. Nursery Stock Certificates Issued

Certificate Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nursery Stock Grower	232	236	224	224	226	-
Nursery Stock Dealer	1,819	1,837	1,852	1,845	1,833	-
Live Plant Dealers with growing acres	-	-	-	-	-	~ 360
Live Plant Dealer without growing acres	-	-	-	-	-	~ 1527
Total Certificates	2,051	2,073	2,076	2,069	2,059	~ 1,887

Table 2. Nursery Stock Growing Acres

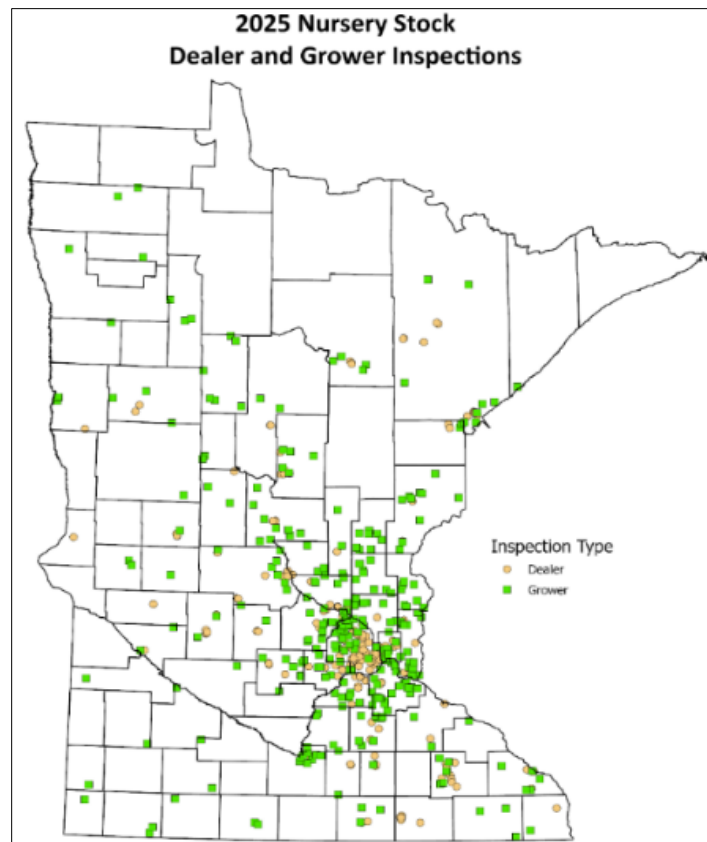
Certificate Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Nursery Stock Grower	3,954	3,804	4,116	4,022	4,031	-
Nursery Stock Dealer	2,204	995	1,319	1,050	973	-
Live Plant Dealer	-	-	-	-	-	5,266
Total Acres	6,158	4,799	5,435	5,072	5,004	5,266

Nursery Stock Inspections

The Nursery Certification Program employed five regional staff members based in Brainerd, Rochester, St. Cloud, and the Twin Cities. Staff completed 570 nursery inspections in 2025, including 345 mandatory inspections of growers and dealers with growing stock. A mandatory inspection is done on all nursery stock grown in Minnesota that is for sale.

Inspections at sites without growing stock are prioritized to focus on out-of-state stock sources and sales volume. These clients are classified as high or moderate priority based on purchase amounts. Inspectors completed 225 of these inspections in 2025.

Figure 1. Locations of 2025 nursery stock dealer and grower inspections.



Plant Pest Incidents

The purpose of an inspection is to identify plants that are not certified for sale due to a plant insect, disease, noxious weed, or other plant health condition. Each inspection in which a plant pest is found is considered a single incident of that specific pest or pathogen.

The term *incidents* is used in reporting 2025 findings to show the general spread of the pest or pathogen throughout the state, while the number of plants indicates overall volume and is noted separately in the data below. Plants may be restricted until the appropriate regulatory response is completed, allowing plants to be offered for sale. In 2025, inspectors reported 991 incidents involving 14,032 plants that required regulatory action.

Insect Pests

The most common insects and plant pests encountered during the 2025 season were eastern spruce gall adelgid, boring insects, spider mites, and scale (Table 3). Eastern spruce gall adelgid hosts include Black Hills spruce, Norway spruce, red spruce, white spruce, and black spruce. Females overwinter near terminal buds at the ends of shoots. In spring, females mature and lay eggs, and nymphs hatch and feed at the base of the newly formed needles. Feeding stimulates the formation of galls at the base of the current year's growth.

These galls seldom kill the trees, but they can reduce the aesthetics of an infested tree. Galls are round or pineapple-shaped and measure three-quarters to 1 inch in length as shown in Figure 2. Trees are held off sale until successful treatment is completed.

Boring insects are detrimental and impactful to the nursery industry. A small population of wood-boring insects can feed, tunnel, and kill large numbers of trees. Early detection of borers can be difficult to find, and infested trees are removed and destroyed.

Spider mites and scale insects are sap sucking plant pests that, when present in large numbers, can cause stunting, branch dieback, leaf drop, and in rare occasions, plant death. Scale insects may also spread plant viruses and are often difficult to manage and eradicate. Affected plants are held off sale until treated.

Figure 2. Eastern spruce gall adelgid.



Table 3. Top Insect Pests

Most Reported Insects	Number of Times Reported	Number of Plants Reported
Eastern Spruce Gall Adelgid	41	627
General Borer	12	31
General Spider Mites	10	407
General Scale	6	120
Zimmerman Pine Moth	6	18
Pine Bark Adelgid	5	28
Spruce Gall Midge	4	30
Pine Needle Scale	3	64
Elm Zigzag Sawfly	3	36
Linden Borer	3	19

Table 4. Top Significant Diseases

Most Reported Diseases	Number of Times Reported	Number of Plants Reported
Suspected Virus	150	5,865
Various Canker	103	185
Pseudomonas Blight	65	339
Daylily Rust	26	948
Dothistroma Needle Blight	25	101
White Pine Blister Rust	18	29
Brown Spot Needle Blight	13	82
Aster Yellows	13	45
Rhizosphaera Needle Cast	12	222
Venturia Shoot Blight	10	566
General Rust	10	103
Anthracnose	9	30
Various Shoot Blight	6	282

Disease Pests

The most significant diseases identified during 2025 inspections included suspected viruses and cankers (Table 4). Viral infections can manifest in a variety of symptoms, including leaf discoloration, wilting, necrosis, deformities, stunted growth, reduced vigor, and poor fruit quality. Because viruses cannot be cured, plants suspected of having a virus are submitted for laboratory testing. A negative laboratory test result is required prior to sale. If the plant is positive for a virus, the plant is removed and destroyed. In total, 5,865 plants were suspected of viral infection in 2025. Cankers can be caused by living organisms, weather, or mechanical wounds. Trees with cankers must be removed and destroyed. In many cases, the specific identity of the canker organism is not determined and is reported as general canker.

Abiotic Causes

Along with insects and disease organisms, inspectors encountered several abiotic disorders. These conditions are caused by environmental factors. In 2025, nursery inspectors reported frost injury, moisture stress, nutrient deficiencies, and mechanical injuries (Table 5). Nursery stock is considered nonviable if it is determined that stock will not grow with normal vigor, even with reasonable care. Nonviable plants were removed from sale.

Table 5. Top Abiotic Incidents

Most Reported Abiotic	Number of Times Reported	Number of Plants Reported
Nonviable	163	443
Nickel Deficiency	8	34
Moisture Stress	7	68
General Animal Damage	2	7
General Chlorosis	2	3
Frost Injury	1	400

Viruses

MDA inspectors use the University of Minnesota Plant Disease Clinic (PDC) to submit samples that are suspect for viruses. If ten or fewer plants show viral symptoms, inspectors flag the plants, document them as a general virus and allow the business to submit its own sample to the PDC. If results are negative, the plants may be sold. If more than ten plants exhibit viral symptoms, inspectors still flag the plants but submit the samples themselves to the PDC. Sample results are sent to the inspector with the specific virus identified and those results are then sent to the client. If the result is positive, the plant material must be removed and destroyed.

Inspectors noticed an increase in plants with viral symptoms in the 2025 field season. These include lilac leaf chlorosis virus, spirea yellow leaf spot virus, and spirea emaravirus on different varieties of spirea, and Hydrangea ringspot virus. Viral symptoms were also observed on peony, aconitum, Hosta, clematis, delphinium, dogwood, grape, hollyhock, coneflower, ninebark, weigela, toad lily, and dicentra.

Figure 3. Lilac leaf chlorosis virus on lilac.



Lab Sampling

The Nursery Inspection and Certification program uses three labs to test for different types of plant pest issues. Two are external program labs, and the other is the MDA Plant and Seed Analysis Unit laboratory (MDA-PSA lab). The MDA entomologist is also utilized in identifying insects of concern. Staff took a total of 34 samples during the 2025 field season.

The MDA-PSA lab tests for diseases of concern that are not currently known to be established in Minnesota. Two samples were submitted to the MDA-PSA lab, one tested positive for red star rust. Inspectors also submitted samples to the Plant Disease Clinic (PDC) at the University of Minnesota (UofM). Nineteen samples were submitted, with ten testing positive for various viruses, diseases, and other plant pests.

To help protect pollinators, [Minnesota Statutes, 18H.14 Labeling and Advertising of Nursery Stock](#) prohibits the advertisement or labeling of plants as beneficial to pollinators if they have been treated with a systemic insecticide and have a concentration of insecticide in its plant parts above the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) level established for mortality of adult honeybees. When advertising is found, the inspector may take a sample and send it to a third-party lab to test for eight different systemic insecticides, each with its own threshold of toxicity to honeybees. Inspectors took 11 samples for analysis. Two of the samples were found to contain a level of systemic insecticide above the EPA's levels deemed lethal to honeybees.

Violations

In 2025, the Nursery Inspection and Certification program issued 79 reports of violation to Live Plant Dealer certificate holders. The enforcement of Minnesota’s Noxious Weed Law resulted in the highest incidents of violations. Amur, Norway, and Tatarian maples are specially regulated noxious weeds in Minnesota and must be labeled with instructions to plant only in areas where seedlings will be controlled and at least 100 yards from natural areas. The lack of proper labeling accounted for 40 incidents.

Minnesota regulations require all nursery stock to be labeled with the correct hardiness zone as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Thirty violations were due to mislabeling of cold hardiness, a decrease from 2024, which had 55 reports of violation.

Four violations were for dormant-packaged plants that had not been stored properly and were nonviable. Packaged plants are sold in early spring and must be kept dormant to maintain viability. Once they break dormancy, they must be planted immediately, or they will likely not survive.

Minnesota regulations also require all nonhardy nursery stock to be labeled for proper hardiness or be labeled “nonhardy”. One violation was issued, and 12 plants were corrected based on the [cold hardiness list](#) on the MDA website.

The sale of restricted noxious weeds, including winged burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), Siberian pea shrub (*Caragana arborescens*), and Tamarisk 'Summer Glow' (*Tamarix ramosissima*) were documented at three locations, resulting in a stop sale of 43 plants. It is in violation of the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law to offer for sale or propagate restricted plants. The current [Minnesota Noxious Weed List](#) can be viewed on the MDA website.

Table 6. Reports of Violation

Violation Type	Incidents	Number of Plants Affected
Specially Regulated Noxious Weed: Amur, Norway, and Tatarian Maple	40	297
Mislabeled Cold-Hardiness Plants	30	213
Dormant Packaged Plants	4	450
Missing Nonhardy Labeling	1	12
Root Ball Not Covered	1	2
Sale of Restricted Noxious Weed	3	43
Total	79	1017

Table 7. Reports of Restricted Noxious Weed Violation

Restricted Noxious Weed	Sites	Incidents	Number of Plants Affected
Winged Burning Bush (<i>Euonymus alatus</i>)	1	1	25
Tamarisk (<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>)	1	1	13
Siberian Peashrub (<i>Caragana spp.</i>)	1	1	5
Total	3	3	43

Regulated Noxious Weeds

The MDA also inspects for invasive plants offered for sale. Plants found on the [Minnesota Noxious Weed List](#) must be removed from sale and may result in fines or penalties. There are four separate categories of noxious weeds in Minnesota: prohibited-eradicate, prohibited-control, restricted, and specially regulated. Prohibited-eradicate, prohibited-control, and restricted noxious weeds cannot be sold or propagated within the state of Minnesota. Specially regulated plants are noxious weeds that have specific management criteria and may be sold but have restrictions within the nursery trade.

Prohibited-Eradicate Noxious Weeds

No prohibited-eradicate noxious weeds were found during routine nursery inspections in 2025.

Prohibited-Control Noxious Weeds

No prohibited-control noxious weeds were found during routine nursery inspections in 2025.

Restricted Noxious Weeds

During routine inspections in 2025, inspectors found the following restricted noxious weeds being offered for sale at dealer and grower locations. Please note Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* Decne) was added to the Restricted Noxious Weed list in 2023 and after a three-year phaseout, it will be prohibited for sale in 2026.

- Winged burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) was added to the restricted list in 2023. In 2025, one site was found offering winged burning bush for sale. A total of 25 plants received stop sale orders, requiring the plants to be removed from sale.
- Tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) was placed on the Restricted Noxious Weeds List in 2023. In 2025, one site was found offering 13 plants for sale, which were issued an order to stop sale.
- Siberian pea shrub (*Caragana arborescens*) was added to the restricted list in 2020. In 2025, one site was found offering five plants for sale which were ordered off sale.

Specially Regulated Noxious Weeds

Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), and Tatarian maple (*Acer tataricum*) are specially regulated plants. They have demonstrated economic value but also have the potential to cause harm in uncontrolled environments. Specific rules or management plans, developed by the MDA under Minnesota

Statutes, 18.771(e), require these plants to be accompanied by a label detailing how to distance planting from native areas and be controlled by mowing or other means to avoid further disbursement. Each plant must have the specially regulated language affixed as an instruction tag for the consumer. A Report of Violation is issued if this information is absent, plants are removed from sale until the labeling is corrected, and fines or penalties may apply. In 2025, 40 sites with 297 plants were found without proper labeling.

Wildflower Permits

To protect the state flower and other endangered wildflowers, Minnesota Statutes, 18H.18 Conservation of Certain Wildflowers prohibits the sale of certain wildflowers without written permission from the property owner and a permit from the MDA. Protected plants must be cultivated for a minimum period of one growing season and cannot be sold directly after being collected. In 2025, four permits were issued.

Figure 4. Lady slipper wildflowers.



Nursery Exports

Nursery stock and plants being exported must meet certain phytosanitary conditions for entry into foreign countries, including an inspection and the witnessing of official treatments. The MDA issued 152 Federal Phytosanitary Certificates for nursery stock.

2025 Phytosanitary Certificates for Exports

- 820,883 plants
- 96,655 bulbs/roots/tubers (mainly re-exports from Amsterdam going to Canada)

Japanese Beetle Certification

Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) is a regulated plant pest. Beetles can be very destructive as beetle grubs in the soil feed on roots and are attracted to managed turf, such as athletic fields and golf courses. Adult beetles damage a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and fruit plants. Once established, Japanese beetles can be very difficult to control.

To regulate the movement of Japanese beetle infested plant material, the U.S. Domestic Japanese Beetle Harmonization Plan (JBHP) was established designating infested and non-infested areas. Generally, states west of Minnesota maintain non-infested status. The JBHP details certification requirements to allow shipping regulated articles from infested states, including Minnesota, to uninfested areas. Some west coast and Rocky Mountain states have stricter requirements.

The MDA conducts a survey program to certify Minnesota-grown nursery stock and sod for shipping to uninfested states. Certification methods include a trapping program targeting adult beetles using a food lure and a sex pheromone. Traps must be in place by June 1 and must remain in place until October 1. In 2025, traps were placed at four nurseries and one sod farm across the state. These sites are isolated from areas in Minnesota that are generally infested with Japanese beetles. Negative trapping results allow growers to ship to uninfested Category 2 states. No new infested sites were found in 2025.

Figure 5. Japanese beetles in a trap.



For sites in the generally infested areas in Minnesota, or those where trapping results are positive, a soil survey targeting Japanese beetle grubs can be done for certification. In 2025, six nurseries, some with multiple sites, had their soil sampled. A total of 765 acres were sampled, and all six soil sampling sites were free from Japanese beetle grubs. To be eligible for this certification method, plants must be maintained in a weed-free zone.

In addition to trapping and soil survey, the JBHP allows for certification of nursery stock based on approved insecticide treatments, including the incorporation of granular insecticide into potting media or pre-harvest treatment for field-grown stock. Regular treatments to manage adult beetles during flight periods and monitoring for beetles when loading stock are also required to minimize beetles hitchhiking on plant material.

Certification can also be based on certain production and handling protocols. Production in an approved screen house or outside the adult beetle flight period allows certification to Category 1 states. Container-grown nursery stock produced on an impervious surface meets the conditions of the JBHP container accreditation protocol for Category 2 states. Bare root stock is exempt from JBHP requirements.

Twenty-nine Minnesota nurseries participated in the 2025 Japanese beetle certification program. Compliance agreements were sent once trapping and soil sampling were completed in October. Once signed and returned, the agreements were signed by the Minnesota state plant health director.

Upon completion of the compliance agreements, Certificates of Quarantine Compliance (CQC) are issued, detailing the certification methods used. These certificates must accompany shipments to Japanese beetle-regulated states.

Spongy Moth

Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) is a federally regulated plant pest in the eastern United States and Canadian provinces. Populations exist in the far northeastern region of Minnesota. Cook and Lake counties are quarantined for spongy moth, where it is considered established, but populations have not yet reached outbreak levels. Spongy moth is not established in the rest of the state. Annually, the MDA's Spongy Moth Survey program places approximately 20,000 early detection traps to monitor for isolated populations. Survey traps are placed at Live Plant Dealer sites within the spongy moth survey project area (Figure 6).

The MDA regularly reviews and audits spongy moth quarantine compliance throughout Minnesota by assuring nursery stock received from spongy moth quarantine areas arrives with proper certification to assure it is free of spongy moth prior to entering non-quarantined areas of Minnesota. Live Plant Dealers that report stock sources

from areas in a spongy moth quarantine are considered high-risk. Nurseries and Christmas tree lots are inspected for proper spongy moth certification and documentation through the MDA’s Nursery Inspection and Certification program to ensure compliance with the federal spongy moth quarantine.

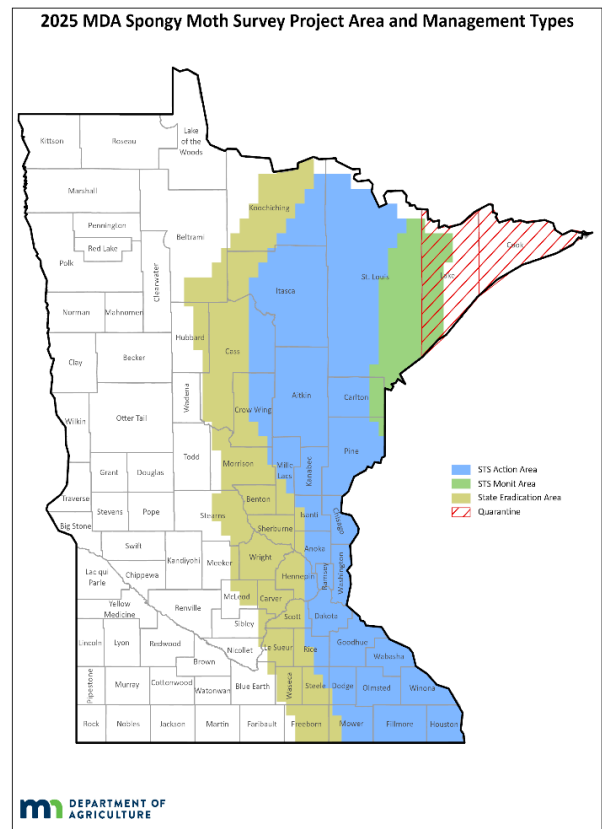
In 2025, no violations were reported for non-certified stock arriving without proper certification. However, in rare circumstances, certified products can arrive infested, so nursery operations should carefully inspect regulated stock upon arrival, before unloading. There are currently no nursery stock growers located within the Minnesota spongy moth quarantine area.

The MDA establishes compliance agreements with entities wishing to move regulated articles out of spongy moth quarantine areas. Most regulatory activities occur in Cook and Lake counties, which were quarantined in 2014. Cook and Lake counties are also under a parallel federal quarantine for spongy moth. Because there are currently no nursery growers, only nursery dealers, in these counties, much of the MDA’s focus is on the timber and holiday greenery industries.

In 2025, the MDA’s trapping survey yielded 7,368 male spongy moths in 2,615 positive traps. In 2024, the total catch was 51,466 months, and in 2023, 112,932 male moths were captured. With Minnesota’s catches significantly lower and concentrated in the eastern half of the Slow the Spread (STS) areas, the STS decision algorithm is suggesting 2026 project boundaries that significantly recede eastward compared to 2025 across most of the state.

As spongy moth populations continue moving forward, more areas on the eastern side of Minnesota will “fall out” of the trapping survey project area. However, that is anticipated to continue to be a gradual progression, and those areas will typically have been quarantined well in advance. It is important for the nursery trade to stay vigilant to ensure this pest does not become established in Minnesota.

Figure 6. 2025 MDA spongy moth survey project area.



Nursery and Christmas Tree Farm Survey

The introduction of pests through the nursery industry and Christmas tree farms is a threat to urban forests, natural ecosystems, and agricultural crops in the United States. In recent years, multiple interceptions of invasive species to Minnesota and neighboring states have occurred through these industries. These introductions have led to trace forward events, delimit surveys, and regulatory actions such as stop sales and

collect and destroy events, demonstrating the need for a comprehensive survey to monitor for invasive insects and pathogens in the nursery industry and Christmas tree farms in Minnesota.

The Plant Protection Act (PPA) 7721 Nursery and Christmas Tree Farm survey looked at host plants for diseases and insects and placed insect traps. Traps were checked every other week, and insects were stored in the freezer until screening. Visual observations for insects resulted in finds of elm zigzag sawfly (*Aproceros leucopoda*) and spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*).

Ornamental and edible prunus species were surveyed for plum pox virus (PPV) according to USDA protocols. Forty-five samples were collected from seven sites in six different counties. Water samples were collected from irrigation ponds and standing water from all nurseries in early June and early September. Water was baited with rhododendron leaves and tested for sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*) and beech bleeding canker (*Phytophthora kernoviae*). All PPV and *Phytophthora* samples tested negative.

The survey field season ended September 5. Trap catch is being screened; results are pending. Plant disease samples submitted to the lab include positive finds for red star rust (*Gymnosporangium yamadae*).

Figure 7. Collecting soil and water samples.



A more detailed report about this survey can be found on the [MDA's Pest Survey webpage](#).

Holiday Greenery

Holiday greenery and Christmas tree inspections are conducted annually by the MDA throughout the state of Minnesota under the authority of Minnesota statutes, 18G.03. The purpose of these inspections is to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests within the state and to aid in pest suppression and control. Holiday greenery inspections take place from the week before Thanksgiving to the week before Christmas. However, at the end of October to prepare for the season, inspectors will begin to call and survey large wholesale and retail locations to determine when out-of-state stock will be delivered.

Holiday greenery inspections include cut Christmas trees, spruce tips and other cuttings, porch pots, wreaths, tabletop décor, swags, garland, birch poles, and other woody stems and branches. Audits of shipping documents are conducted at the beginning of each inspection to determine federal quarantine compliance. If stock arrives from a federally quarantined area, it is required under federal and state requirements that the receiving facility have certification documents at the site. Emphasis is placed on federally regulated or federally quarantined

plant pests such as boxwood blight and spongy moth, as well as unestablished non-native plant pests like elongate hemlock scale and spotted lanternfly.

Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS)

Elongate hemlock scale (*Fiorina externa*) is believed to have been introduced from Japan and is currently established in the eastern United States. It is reported to develop and reproduce on 43 species of conifers, primarily hemlock, fir, and spruce. Currently, Minnesota does not have any documented established populations of elongate hemlock scale, but the movement of cut holiday greenery and Christmas trees from infested regions of the United States poses a risk of transporting this pest to Minnesota.

Holiday greenery inspections over the past several years have identified multiple locations that receive shipments of Christmas trees and wreaths infested with elongate hemlock scale. Infested trees may be resold if they are properly reconditioned by removing infested branches or returned to the sender or destroyed.

After finding over 1,000 cut Christmas trees infested with elongate hemlock scale in 2019, the MDA began an intensive outreach campaign to retailers reminding them that elongate hemlock scale and other invasive pests can be transported on holiday greens and Christmas trees. Retailers are targeted with information as they prepare to order for the holiday season. The MDA also reached out to partner agencies and stakeholders to communicate a clear, consistent message regarding early detection and proper disposal options.

The MDA created a [holiday greenery best management practices webpage](#) as a one stop shop for early detection and disposal guidance. Typically, holiday greenery buyers from chain stores are contacted by the MDA before stock begins to move to provide plant pest quarantine documents for stock they plan to ship. Inspectors also hand out an outreach packet to the survey sites that they visit which include information on elongate hemlock scale, spongy moth, and other pests of concern along with the appropriate way for consumers to dispose of their holiday greenery.

Table 8. 2025 Holiday Greenery Inspections

Holiday Greenery Inspection Sites	2022	2023	2024	2025
Box stores	78	104	62	60
Certified nursery sites	44	62	17	45
Other sites – temporary tree lots, grocery, hardware, craft, etc.	37	76	57	77
Total	159	242	136	199

In 2025, six MDA staff conducted holiday greenery inspections between November and December, which included 182 surveys/inspections of approximately 74,237 Christmas trees and countless wreaths, swags, porch pots, and other cut greens. Within the 182 survey sites, 60 were big box stores like Home Depot, Walmart, and Menards, and 45 were certified nursery sites representing the highest number of inspection visits. Other sites visited were grocery stores, temporary Christmas tree sales lots, hardware, and craft stores. Elongate hemlock scale was found at eight locations, and 53 pieces of holiday greenery were infested with elongate hemlock scale and removed from sale. Infested products included 10 cut Christmas trees and 43 bundles of Fraser fir cuttings. Survey results show that nearly equal amounts of product were purchased from Minnesota suppliers and out-of-state suppliers, with Wisconsin, Michigan, and Canadian provinces being the largest out-of-state sources.

Overall, significant and beneficial changes are taking place in the holiday greenery industry where stakeholders have an interest in limiting holiday greenery pest introductions. Growers, distributors, and retailers are more aware of the problems holiday greenery pests present. More retailers are sourcing their materials locally and have fewer problems and pest risks.

Table 9. 2025 Holiday Greenery Inspections

Holiday Greenery Inspections	2022	2023	2024	2025
Christmas trees inspected	22,000	42,000	64,700	74,237
Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS) on Christmas trees	317	1,618	628	10
Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS) on wreaths, porch pots, tabletop pots, and tree boughs	364	156	9	43

Table 10. 2025 Elongate Hemlock Scale Incidents During Holiday Greenery Inspections

Elongate Hemlock Scale Incidents	2022	2023	2024	2025
Articles with Elongate Hemlock Scale	681	1,774	637	53
Sites with Stop Sales Issued	13	25	5	8

Quarantine Compliance

The MDA establishes compliance agreements with entities that wish to move regulated articles out of quarantine areas into non-quarantined areas of the state. For spongy moth, most regulatory activities occur in Cook and Lake counties, which were quarantined in July 2014 and are also under a parallel federal quarantine for spongy moth. For emerald ash borer (EAB), 59 of Minnesota’s 87 counties are under full or partial quarantine by the MDA, with six new counties added in 2025.

The MDA issues three types of compliance agreements for the movement of regulated articles: limited permits, accurate statements, and certificates. The type of documentation issued depends on which regulated articles are transported and how they will be used (Table 11).

Temporary state emergency quarantines are implemented by the MDA when an EAB infestation is found in a new county or outside current quarantine boundaries. Emergency quarantine boundaries are incorporated into the formal EAB quarantine following stakeholder input and public comment. The MDA may also implement temporary state emergency quarantines when reproducing spongy moth populations are found; these quarantines are typically lifted after treatments are completed. A public meeting and comment period follows the initial announcement of all emergency quarantines. In 2025, temporary state emergency quarantines for spongy moth were enacted in specific areas of Coon Rapids, Grand Rapids, and Winona, Minnesota.

Table 11. Spongy Moth and Emerald Ash Borer Compliance Agreements and Limited Permits.

Compliance Agreements (CA) and Limited Permits	Spongy Moth	Emerald Ash Borer
Limited Permits	34	0
Transport CA	10	0
Firewood Heat Treatment CA (Certified Kilns)	18	18
Mulch/Compost CA	N/A	14
Fumigation CA	N/A	1
Logs and Firewood Receiver CA	5	0
Pulpwood and Sawbolt Receiver CA	7	N/A
Holiday Greenery CA	3	N/A

Firewood Heat Treatment Certification

The MDA offers a fee-based Firewood Certification Program for businesses or individuals interested in selling pest-free firewood that meets the USDA heat-treatment standards for wood-boring pests. This heat-treatment certification kills a wide variety of plant pests that are commonly transported in firewood, including emerald ash borer, which is regulated in 59 of Minnesota’s 87 counties as of December 2025.

Heat-treatment certification allows hardwood firewood to move freely between counties with and without emerald ash borer restrictions. Fourteen MDA-certified companies in Minnesota operate 18 kilns. A [list of Certified Firewood Producers](#) is available on the MDA website.

For More Information

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