

# Giant pine scale update

12 February 2015

Giant pine scale, an insect pest that feeds on the sap of pine, fir and spruce trees, was recently found in metropolitan Melbourne.

The Department of Economic Development (DED) is conducting a program to control this pest and protect Australia's \$1 billion softwood plantation industry.

## The program

In Melbourne, more than 500 trees infested with giant pine scale have been found, on both private and public land.

Two restricted areas have been established around the sites where the pest has been detected:

1. **Mt Waverley**, including the surrounding suburbs of Ashwood, Ashburton, Glen Iris, Chadstone, Carnegie, Murrumbeena, Bentleigh East, Oakleigh, Clayton, Clarinda, Heatherton, and Moorabbin
2. **Harkaway**, including parts of Berwick, Narre Warren, Hallam, Endeavour Hills, Lysterfield, Belgrave, Emerald, Dewhurst, Beaconsfield Upper and Beaconsfield.

Within these areas, surveillance, sampling and control work will be undertaken over the next few months.

This will include visiting residential properties to inspect host trees and treat any infested trees.

The majority of infested trees will be treated using an insecticide stem injection, which is highly suitable for urban areas. In some locations where chemical treatment is not feasible, trees may need to be removed.

Staff conducting property visits will carry official identification and will only need to view garden areas.

## Current situation

Surveillance in the Mt Waverley restricted area is almost complete and treatment of infested trees has begun. Surveillance began this week in the Harkaway restricted area but treatments have yet to commence.

Residents of both areas have received a notice about the program in their letterbox and local media have been engaged to improve community awareness of the program.

Registered beekeepers have been advised that the potential effect on honey bees of tree treatment is unknown and they should consider moving their hives.

As surveillance proceeds, any suspected detections of giant pine scale will be followed up by sampling teams, who will collect samples of the suspected pest so that its identity can be confirmed.

Sampling teams, and people undertaking control work will wear protective suits (see image below) to minimise the risk of spreading the pest (new disposable suits are used at each property). Other hygiene procedures are also used to minimise the risk of spread.



DEDJTR employees will be wearing protective suits when sampling or treating trees.

Surveillance teams are not required to wear these suits as they do not come into direct contact with host trees or their immediate surroundings.

In Melbourne to date, giant pine scale has been found on the following pine species:

- Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*)
- Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*)
- Stone pine (*Pinus pinea*)

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## What does giant pine scale look like?

Giant pine scale produces a distinctive white, cotton-like wax secretion (see image below). The adult scale insect can be up to 12 millimetres in length.

The insect prefers the lower part of the tree and mainly occurs on the trunk, but it may also be found on branches well up in the canopy, and even on exposed roots.

In addition, look out for the black sooty mould which may grow on the large amounts of honeydew produced by the insects as they feed on plant sap.



The white, waxy secretion produced by giant pine scale

## Which trees are not affected?

Trees which may look similar to pines, spruces and firs, but are **not** hosts of giant pine scale, include cypresses and *Araucaria*, *Allocasuarina*, *Casuarina* and *Callitris* species.

## Restricted areas

The Harkaway and Mt Waverley detection areas have been declared restricted areas for the control of giant pine scale. Giant pine scale host material must not be removed from these areas without a permit.

No host plants (pines, firs and spruces) or host material may be removed from the restricted areas. This includes plant roots and leaves, mulch, woodchip, soil or any equipment that has been in contact with a host plant or host material.

If you think you may need a permit to move anything, contact the Department of Economic Development via the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 (toll-free).

To read the full gazette order, please see this link [www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2015/GG2015SO21.pdf](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2015/GG2015SO21.pdf)

## Report suspected detections

Report any suspected detections of giant pine scale by:

- phoning the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 (toll-free)
- emailing photos of the suspected pest, together with a contact phone number and the pest's location, to [plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:plant.protection@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

More information about giant pine scale can be found at [www.vic.gov.au/giantpinescale](http://www.vic.gov.au/giantpinescale)

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