



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-4073
(831)454-2000 | www.santacruzcountyca.gov
Nicole D. Coburn, County Executive Officer

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Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcountyca.gov

AG COMMISSIONER URGES RESIDENTS TO REPORT POSSIBLE INVASIVE PEST ON GRAPE PLANTS SOLD AT COSTCO

The County of Santa Cruz is urging residents to take immediate precautions after the invasive glassy-winged sharpshooter was discovered on grape plants sold at Costco stores throughout the wider Bay Area region. The Santa Cruz Costco store was among those that received these grape plants from a wholesale nursery located in Fresno County.

The insect, a type of leafhopper, spreads Pierce's disease -- a plant bacterium that kills grapevines and can also harm almond, citrus and ornamental plants -- creating a serious risk for California agriculture and home gardens. Anyone who purchased grape vines from Bay Area Costco locations on or after April 21 should contact their county agricultural office to help stop the pest from spreading further.

"The glassy-winged sharpshooter is a threat to a variety of agricultural plants, and preventing further spread is critical," Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner David Sanford said. "We are working closely with Costco, as well as state and local partners, to pinpoint affected plants and safeguard agriculture, home gardens and landscapes. The food supply is not affected. Costco has been responsive and helpful throughout this situation and is not responsible for the discovery. Unfortunately, the issue occurred at the nursery supplier level."

Residents who purchased grape plants from Costco on or after April 21 should refrain from moving or disposing of the plants; rather, place two garbage bags over the plant and secure them tightly, then immediately contact the Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at 831-763-8080 or Agc002@agdept.com to arrange an inspection.

Native to the southeastern United States and Mexico, the glassy-winged sharpshooter was first identified in California in the 1990s and is now established in parts of central and southern California. The pest threatens the state's grape industry and is known to feed on more than 250 plant species, damaging vineyards and ornamental landscapes alike.

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