



2026 - ISSUE 3

bulletin



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

GWSS Response Shows Value of Early Detection and Rapid Action

Two recent nursery shipment incidents involving glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) show the importance of investing in early detection, rapid response, and strong partnerships.

GWSS is the main insect that spreads Pierce's disease (PD), which is fatal to grapevines. In both incidents, state, and county officials moved quickly to find affected plants, reduce the risk of spread and keep industry partners informed.

The first incident involved GWSS-infested grapevines shipped from a Fresno County nursery to Costco stores in 24 counties between April 21 and May 21. See the list of counties at bit.ly/GWSS-Costco. Since some customers purchased grapevines outside the county where they live, officials expanded the response into 16 neighboring counties where affected plants may have been taken.

Counties are working to contact about 7,000 customers and locate nearly 10,000 grapevines.

Officials are inspecting plants and nearby areas, safely removing potentially infested vines and placing traps near store and customer locations. State and county officials have also strengthened oversight at the source nursery.

As of mid July, CDFA was also responding to a separate nursery shipment incident involving desert willow plants shipped from Texas to Costco stores in California. GWSS egg masses were found on some of the plants, which were shipped to 68 stores in 21 counties. Some plants were stopped before they arrived at Costco, and others were destroyed at Costco before they were sold.

GWSS Nursery Shipment Responses



Grapevines: 40 counties & ~10,000 plants



Desert Willows: 18 counties & 376 plants



Contacting customers



Plant inspections & safe disposal



Trapping through Sept. 30



Nursery oversight strengthened



PAGE 2

Keep Watch for the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter

PAGE 3

On the Research Front

- Augmenting Pierce's Disease Winter Recovery Using Pre-Winter Treatments
- From Vector to Vine: Detection Method Development, Vector Competence, and Latency of Grapevine Red Blotch Virus
- Current Status and Impact of Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter Biological Control in California

PAGE 4

Red Blotch Symptoms Are Showing. Now What?

continued on page 2

As of mid July, CDFA is aware of 376 desert willows sold in 52 stores in 18 counties between June 24 and July 3. See the list of counties at bit.ly/GWSS-Costco.

“This response shows why early detection and rapid action are so important,” said Michelle Pham, with the Pierce’s Disease Control Program. “State officials, county agricultural commissioners, retailers, and industry partners are working together to locate affected plants, expand monitoring, and help protect California vineyards.”

Inspection Findings are Encouraging

For the grapevine response, most detections continue to primarily be egg masses and nymphs. As of early July, only a small number of adult GWSS had been found statewide, and officials have found no evidence so far of new GWSS infestations establishing in the environment.

For the desert willow response, only GWSS egg masses have been found as of early July. One egg mass of a broad-headed sharpshooter was also found at one of the stores. This insect is not known to occur in California and can also spread PD.

Response Efforts Continue

Counties are still locating and inspecting plants, and traps remain in place near stores and customer locations. Monitoring will continue through at least Sept. 30, the end of the regular trapping season, to detect any GWSS that may have moved beyond the affected plants.

Continued monitoring will be important over time because it can take multiple seasons to determine whether GWSS has become established in a new area.

What Growers Can Do

Early reporting supports rapid response efforts and helps protect vineyards throughout California.

- If you suspect you have found GWSS or PD symptoms, contact your local agricultural commissioner's office. List of county offices: bit.ly/CountyAg
- Learn about GWSS and see pictures: bit.ly/GWSS_Info
- Learn about PD and see pictures: bit.ly/PD_Info
- For the latest updates and educational materials, visit: bit.ly/GWSS-Costco

Keep Watch for the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter



GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER

This pest spreads a disease that kills grapevines and harms other plants

Actual Adult Size



1/2 in.



Fresh Egg Mass

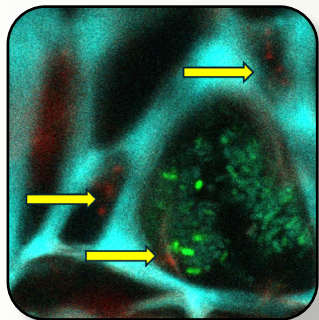


Old Egg Mass



Immature Insect (nymph)

IF YOU SEE IT, CONTACT YOUR COUNTY AG OFFICE



Pathogen cell death during cold treatment of infected grapevines

Augmenting Pierce's Disease Winter Recovery Using Pre-Winter Treatments

Rodrigo P.P. Almeida, University of California, Berkeley

The team is studying whether fall treatments can help grapevines recover from Pierce's disease over the winter. Early results show all three treatments the researchers are testing reduced the amount of disease-causing bacteria in infected vines. Vines with lower bacteria levels also showed fewer signs of disease. If successful, this approach could give growers a low-cost way to improve vine recovery by supporting the vine's natural winter response. Next, the team will continue field trials and evaluate the approach in commercial vineyards.

From Vector to Vine: Detection Method Development, Vector Competence, and Latency of Grapevine Red Blotch Virus

Dr. Elizabeth Cieniewicz, Clemson University; Dr. Anna E. Whitfield, and Dr. Trino Ascencio-Ibáñez, North Carolina State University

This project is developing better tools to detect grapevine red blotch virus and improve understanding of how it spreads. Researchers are working to create faster, more consistent tests that can be used by laboratories and, eventually, in vineyards. The team is also studying how the virus moves through insect vectors and why infected vines can remain symptom-free for months before showing signs of disease. The goal is to give growers more reliable information to support decisions about testing, vine removal, and replanting.



Grapevine showing symptoms of Grapevine Red Blotch Disease.
Marc Fuchs, Cornell University



Parasitoid wasps target GWSS before it can hatch

Current Status and Impact of Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter Biological Control in California

Matt Daugherty, University of California, Riverside, and Buddhi Achhami, California Department of Food and Agriculture's Pierce's Disease Control Program

This project is evaluating how well beneficial parasitoid wasps are controlling glassy-winged sharpshooter populations in California today. Biological control has been an important part of the state's GWSS management program for more than 20 years, but recent increases in some areas highlight the need to better understand its current impact. Researchers will study where biological control is working best, which wasp species provide the greatest benefit and when parasitoid activity is highest. The findings will help strengthen long-term GWSS management and support more effective, sustainable protection of vineyards.

Red Blotch Symptoms Are Showing. Now What?

By mid-summer, some vineyards begin to show the first signs of grapevine red blotch disease. In red grape varieties, symptoms may appear as red patches on leaves. But symptoms do not always show up the same way, or at the same time. Some vines may still look healthy throughout the growing season.

That is why July and August are important months for observation. As symptoms begin to appear, growers have an opportunity to learn more about where red blotch may be present in their vineyards and identify areas that may need closer attention later in the season.

Looking for Patterns

Red blotch does not always appear evenly throughout a vineyard. You may notice groups of vines with symptoms in one area while nearby rows appear unaffected.

These patterns can provide useful information. A cluster of symptomatic vines may point to an area where red blotch has been present for some time. At the same time, some infected vines may not yet show symptoms, which means what you see in the vineyard may only be part of the picture.

Taking note of where symptoms appear can help you track changes over time and identify areas that may benefit from additional testing or monitoring.

Today's Observations for Tomorrow's Decisions

Mid-season observations can help growers make more informed decisions later in the year.

Rather than focusing on a few individual vines, look for broader patterns across the block. Marking and mapping symptomatic vines can help identify areas that may need further evaluation after harvest.

Past Board-funded research has shown that red blotch often occurs in groups of vines rather than isolated plants. Research has also shown that some infected vines may not show symptoms right away. Keeping good records can help growers better understand how red blotch is changing within a vineyard from year to year.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR GROWERS

- Mark and map vines showing symptoms. Look for groups of symptomatic vines, not just individual plants.
- Remember that some infected vines may still look healthy.
- Use mid-season observations to help guide testing later in the season.
- Keep records from year to year to track changes and identify problem areas.
- Work with your pest control advisor, vineyard manager or crop consultant to evaluate areas that may need closer attention.

Research Helps Growers Stay Ahead of Red Blotch

The Board continues to support research aimed at improving how red blotch is detected, understood and managed. Learn more about these and other projects in the Annual Research Project Reports: bit.ly/PD-Board-research-projects.

- ***Development and Validation of a Multi-Virus HiPlex PCR Assay for Grapevine Viruses Regulated in California***, led by Dr. Maher Al Rwahnih of UC Davis, is improving testing methods that can detect multiple grapevine viruses from a single sample.
- ***Early and Autonomous Field Detection of Virus Infections in Grapevines***, led by Dr. Luca Brillante of Fresno State University, is developing tools that use imaging and artificial intelligence to identify virus infections before symptoms become obvious.
- ***From Vector to Vine: Detection Method Development, Vector Competence and Latency of Grapevine Red Blotch Virus***, led by Dr. Elizabeth Cieniewicz of Clemson University, is examining how red blotch spreads, how long it takes for symptoms to appear and how infections can be detected more effectively.