
TO: Purchasers of mixed greenery wreaths from Boy Scout Troop 399, Evansville, IN

FROM: Megan Abraham, State Entomologist, Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology

SUBJECT: URGENT Return of Boxwood Blight contaminated wreaths

DATE: December 11, 2017

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology was recently notified by the North Carolina Plant Industry Division of a potentially contaminated shipment of fresh cut Fir and Boxwood stem wreaths that were received on November 22nd by Boy Scout Troop 399 in Evansville as part of an annual fundraising event.

Upon notification to Indiana DNR of this situation, Troop 399 was contacted and a DNR official collected a wreath from this shipment for testing. The wreath did show symptoms of the disease and testing results came back positive for the fungal disease Boxwood Blight (*Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculata*) which is a very destructive disease of boxwoods. Eight other states have also confirmed Boxwood Blight in material that came from the same source in North Carolina. This is of high concern due to the fact that boxwoods are a very commonly used landscape shrub. As the boxwood material in the wreaths dry out the leaves will drop and infect any surrounding vegetation containing boxwood. Infected boxwoods have leaves with brown or tan spots with dark borders, dark brown or black lesions will develop along the stems and heavily infected leaves will turn brown or straw colored causing leaf drop.

<https://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/files/ppfs-or-w-20.pdf>

The DNR is asking members of the public to assist the Indiana DNR and Troop 399 to quickly contain this situation. Those that have purchased wreaths should place their wreaths into a large trash bag as soon as possible and tie up the end of the bag. Please return your wreath (in the bag) to the sales lot at Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 2701 West Franklin Street, Evansville, IN 47712. We are asking everyone to return the wreaths by Sunday December 17th. An attendee will be at the lot from 10 am to 9 pm every day through December 17th. If you cannot find an attendee, or return outside of the hours of 10 am to 9 pm, please make sure your wreath is bagged and tied and place it next to the garage by the church parking lot. We are also asking individuals to leave their name, address and contact number when wreaths are dropped off, particularly those individuals who did not pre-order their wreaths. Indiana DNR will be following up this summer with residents to check boxwoods in the landscape for symptoms. We would like to inspect as many locations that received wreaths as possible. It is important that the wreaths are bagged and we dispose of them properly and that the wreaths are not recycled or composted. Composting these materials can spread the infestation to other areas within the municipality.

Boy Scout Troop 399 is working in cooperation with Indiana DNR to contact purchasers to give them instructions for handling and disposal of these wreaths. For those individuals who purchased Christmas trees from the troop, there is no concern regarding the Christmas trees, only the wreaths with boxwood plants mixed into them. Please continue to enjoy the Christmas trees which may be recycled at a later date.

If you have any questions regarding the wreaths, please contact Megan Abraham at 317-232-4120 or Angela Rust at 812-549-9291. Thank you to Boy Scout Troop 399 for all your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Thank you,



Megan Abraham, State Entomologist