

## NEWS RELEASE



### **BUY LOCAL, BUY GREEN: HOLIDAY GREENERY AND CHRISTMAS TREES SHOULD COME FROM LOCAL SOURCES**

Informed purchases and adherence to state and federal regulations can prevent spread of forest pests

**Arlington, VA**—December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 — Buying freshly-cut evergreen trees and greenery to decorate during the holiday season is a time-honored and favorite tradition. Unfortunately, harmful non-native insects and diseases can hitchhike on these trees and branches, starting new infestations in communities that were previously pest-free. This has become such a serious problem that federal and state governments now regulate the movement of Christmas trees, holiday wreaths, and related material. Buying locally cut trees from established vendors is better for the economy and the environment.

More than 450 non-native forest insects are now established in the United States. Federal and state regulations require certain conditions be met in order to move Christmas trees and wreaths out of areas quarantined due to pest infestations. These regulations are aimed at stopping the spread of gypsy moth, pine shoot beetle, sudden oak death (a tree disease), and other forest pests, which can be transported on holiday plant material.

“Many people have become aware that moving firewood from one locality to another can create new pest infestations, and we want them to realize that movement of other forest products, such as Christmas trees, is another pathway for these insects and diseases to spread,” said Leigh Greenwood, *Don't Move Firewood* campaign manager, The Nature Conservancy. “The best advice is to buy or cut trees and greenery that are grown locally if possible, and when that’s not possible, to buy from a reputable dealer who can provide information about the origin of the products.”

Disposal of Christmas trees and other decorative greenery is also very important in stopping the spread of invasive insects and diseases. Trees and greenery should not be discarded on brush or home compost piles, or discarded on any property – even if it’s legal to do so. Any pests that might be present but dormant on the trees can infect surrounding trees in the spring.

“Many people think they are doing the right thing when they dispose of their Christmas trees in areas where the tree can decompose naturally,” said Greenwood. “However, since these trees and greenery might be harboring pests that can spread to other trees,

the best method of disposal is through a municipal or other tree recycling service or by legally burning them.”

For additional tips and resources about decorating for the holidays with live-cut trees and greenery, please visit: [Dontmovefirewood.org/HolidayGreenery](http://Dontmovefirewood.org/HolidayGreenery)

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To learn more about how to prevent forest pests from destroying forests, log onto [www.dontmovefirewood.org](http://www.dontmovefirewood.org).

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 18 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 117 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Visit us on the Web at [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org).