

Ag officials find insect posing serious threat to winegrowers

By KTVU

A destructive insect that could have serious adverse impacts for wineries and agricultural water use was discovered in Marin County last week, county officials said Wednesday.

An official with the Marin County Department of Agriculture found a glassy-winged sharpshooter last Thursday while inspecting a shipment from a nursery in Ventura County, according to county officials.

That shipment has since been returned, but the name of the nursery that sent it is being withheld to prevent unwanted attention, according to the Department of Agriculture.

The glassy-winged sharpshooter is known to feed on more than 300 plants, including grapevines and almond trees, many of which are found in Northern California. Apples, blackberries and eucalyptus trees are also among the affected species of plants.

Once attached to a host plant, the glassy-winged sharpshooter can drain 200 to 300 times its own body weight in water every day. A tree that has been heavily infested can lose 10 to 15 gallons of fluid each day, requiring farmers to significantly increase irrigation, according to the Department of Agriculture.

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