

*“No other conifer surpasses hemlock in grace and beauty.”*

*Charles Sprague Sargent, American Botanist and Director of Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum*



This year's 50/50 Raffle supports the Huyck Preserve's efforts to save its hemlocks.

Hemlock is so important that it is considered a foundation species, meaning it controls ecosystem processes and helps to structure the ecosystem where it is found. Hemlocks were one of the dominant species of the primeval forest in the northeast until great swaths fell to the tanning industry. The species rebounded, and today hemlocks cover 350 acres of the Huyck Preserve's land. These dark, cool forests are composed of some of our oldest trees and serve many important functions including providing habitat for some of our most charismatic inhabitants (like porcupine, fox, coyote, black bear, deer, and barred owls) and protecting water quality and fresh water habitat along the shores of Lincoln Pond, Lake Myosotis, Trout Creek, and Ten-Mile Creek (including at the Rensselaerville Falls). Many of these areas are also some of our most beloved scenes that would forever change without the grand evergreens.

This year, hemlock woolly adelgid, an invasive aphid-like insect pest was found to have infested four of the five hemlock stands that we have deemed most important to protect. Left untreated, hemlock woolly adelgid kills entire hemlock forests within a matter of years. The world's forests are increasingly critical in the fight against climate change because of their ability to sequester carbon, and the Huyck Preserve is committed to protecting them from forest pests and other threats. Because they build a soft and springy organic duff on the forest floor, hemlock forests are unusually good at locking up carbon on the ground – the loss of a stand of hemlocks, therefore, releases more carbon than a similar loss of other types of forests.

Won't you help? The Huyck Preserve's portion of the 50/50 Raffle earnings will be dedicated to the treatment of hemlock woolly adelgid to ensure the long-term survival of these majestic and valuable trees.