

One of the NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division's greatest responsibilities is to safeguard North Carolina agriculture from the introduction or spread of injurious plant pests and invasive weeds.

Each year dedicated teams of surveyors and trappers are deployed across the state to monitor for the presence of regulated pests that have the potential to impact agriculture by damaging crops and impeding trade. Each insect, plant disease and weed survey follows well defined protocols implemented at biologically significant times to ensure the most efficient and effective results.

To complete the annual trapping and pest surveys, the Plant Protection Section hires and trains temporary employees with a passion for agriculture who love working outdoors. The work is rewarding, and many temporary employees return to work with the same programs year after year. All employees begin their workday from their home, are assigned state vehicles and provided all supplies needed to complete their job responsibilities.

Retirees, students or recent graduates seeking agriculture or horticulture experience, or individuals who work well independently and have availability Monday through Friday during the timeframe for each program are an excellent match for these field-based jobs.

Plant Industry Division is accepting applications for all temporary positions needed for the 2023 season. If interested in any of the following programs and positions, please contact the following:

-- The Spongy Moth Program (formerly Gypsy Moth), which employs temporary employees statewide from April 4 to May 20 and Aug. 12 to Sept. 16. Contact Sara Lalk at sara.lalk@ncagr.gov or 919-707-3743.

-- The Witchweed Program needs survey staff in Cumberland, Sampson, Pender, Bladen and Robeson counties for July 5-Oct. 27. Contact James Ballard at james.ballard@ncagr.gov or 919-303-0479 or Carlie Averitte at carlie.averitte@ncagr.gov or 919-606-2396.

-- The Sweet Potato Weevil trapping program runs Sept. 18 through Oct. 31 in Eastern North Carolina. Contact Paul Adams at paul.adams@ncagr.gov or 919-707-3735.

-- The Red Imported Fire Ant Survey has a flexible timeline for someone located around Burke County. Contact Paul Adams at paul.adams@ncagr.gov or 919-707-3735.