WVDA Confirms Infected Rhododendron Shipments

Charleston W.Va. -- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has confirmed that some plants shipped to Rural King stores in West Virginia are being recalled because of the plant disease, Phytophthora ramorum. Rural King stores have agreed to initiate a voluntary recall of rhododendron plants from affected stores.

“If you purchased a rhododendron from Rural King between March and May of this year, you should monitor the plant for signs of disease, including leaf spots and shoot dieback. If you believe you have infected plants, please reach out to the Department,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

Approximately 110 rhododendron plants from the infected nursery were shipped to West Virginia retailers. Rural King has voluntarily disposed of 38 of the 110 plants. At least 17 other states also received shipments.

Plants can be destroyed by burning, deep burial or double bagging the plant with its roots in heavy-duty trash bags for disposal in a landfill. Make sure to sanitize all garden tools with either 10% bleach or 70% ethanol.

If you have any questions about Phytophthora ramorum, contact the WVDA Plant Industries Division at 304-558-2212.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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