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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: September 15, 2005

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New Pest Threatens Arizona's Vineyards

(Phoenix) – A new insect has been found in the stock of a nursery in Sierra Vista, Arizona and stands to cause harm to key portions of Arizona's agriculture industry. The Glassy Winged Sharpshooter is the **primary carrier** of Pierce's Disease, an infection of the grapevine that has no viable remedy and has the potential to wipe-out the \$18 million wine growing industry here in Arizona and impact vineyard crops. In addition, the pest stands to threaten one of Arizona's key landscaping ornamentals – the oleander.

What was the timeline of events?

- A male and female were first detected in Sierra Vista on August 31, 2005 in a trap that was set out as part of more than 800 traps throughout the state to monitor this pest.
- On September 8, 2005 an additional 140 were placed in key areas around the Sierra Vista nursery to determine the magnitude of this problem.
- Beginning Monday, agriculture inspectors will begin looking for egg masses to further determine the size of the infestation and better prepare for control programs.

What is the history of this pest and how does it operate?

The glassy-winged sharpshooter is native to the southeastern United States. It was first found in California in 1990 and has threatened many of the vineyards in that region. This leafhopper is a large insect, almost a half-inch in length. It is a dark brown to black. Its head and back are stippled with either ivory or yellowish spots. It receives its name from its transparent wings. The glassy-winged sharpshooter can fly up to one-quarter of a mile, and it frequently appears in high numbers. The insect is able to survive winter temperatures dipping as low as 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

The insect overwinters as an adult. It begins laying egg masses from late February through May. The year's first generation matures as adults from May through August. The year's second generation begins as egg masses laid from June through September. It is this generation that produces the next year's offspring.

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