

Greek priests to bless beetle-devastated forest

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Tomicus piniperda is identified as a serious pest in the United States and is regarded as one of the most destructive shoot-feeding species in Europe

A church in northern Greece on Wednesday said it would bless a hilltop forest recently devastated by bark beetle attacks.

"Our Church has always used its weapons, prayer and blessings, even to

address [natural disasters](#)," the Dormition of Mary church of Oreokastro said in a statement.

Experts earlier this month said that almost ten percent of pine trees at the Seich Sou forest overlooking Thessaloniki had been destroyed by larvae of the *Tomicus piniperda* beetle.

Better known as the common pine bark beetle, *Tomicus piniperda* is identified as a serious pest in the United States and is regarded as one of the most destructive shoot-feeding species in Europe.

Seich Sou forest hosts 277 plant species, among which [pine trees](#) are dominant. There are also scattered cypress and plane trees, and many species of poplars.

In 1997, a large fire broke out and burned down more than half of the forest.



Almost ten percent of pine trees at the Seich Sou forest overlooking Thessaloniki had been destroyed by larvae of the *Tomicus piniperda* beetle

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