

News Release
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WVDA GYPSY MOTH TREATMENTS TO BEGIN MID-MAY

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) will treat approximately 974 acres in Hardy County starting in mid-May for the control of gypsy moth through the Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) Suppression Program.

"This treatment program helps to safeguard our state's private and commercial forest resources, all of which are vital components of our state's economy," said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick.

"The gypsy moth is a serious forest pest in West Virginia," added WVDA's Plant Industries Division Assistant Director Quentin "Butch" Sayers. "It's a non-native, invasive insect that feeds on more than 500 species of trees and shrubs, including West Virginia hardwoods. Defoliation by gypsy moth caterpillars can kill trees, or weaken them substantially, making them more susceptible to other pests and diseases."

The young gypsy moth caterpillars are spread by the wind, which catches the silken threads they exude. Movement by this mechanism tends to be slow. Humans have sped the process up considerably by unwittingly transporting gypsy moth egg masses or caterpillars on loads of firewood, RVs, campers and other vehicles. Owners of RVs and campers should thoroughly inspect and wash their equipment before and after moving it.

Sayers also cautioned against moving firewood into or out of the state because pests such as the gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, emerald ash borer and other non-native invasive insects may be in or on the wood.

"Non-native pests such as these can have potentially devastating economic and environmental effects because they can move into areas with few natural predators," said Sayers. "Even with all the precautions we take, gypsy moth will likely continue to spread, but we can help slow down the spread considerably and save many trees."

"The WVDA consulted with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Biologist and United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Services concerning the presence of rare, threatened or endangered species issues in the proposed treatment areas" said Sayers. "Both agencies concurred that no impacts to any rare, threatened or endangered species are anticipated". The WVDA also consulted with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection to be in compliance with the NPDES permitting process which addresses any potential impacts to the waters of West Virginia.

-The contact number for the gypsy moth treatment operation will be the WVDA Charleston Office at 304-558-2212.

The Cooperative State-County-Landowner Program is a joint effort among the WVDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, West Virginia Division of Forestry and landowners throughout the Mountain State. For more information on the WVDA gypsy moth treatment program, contact WVDA Assistant Director, Quentin "Butch" Sayers or Gypsy Moth Program Coordinator, G. Scott Hoffman at 304-788-1066.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.