

## Research Underway to Control Gypsy Moth

The synthetic sex lure of the gypsy moth will be tested for its potential in controlling this pest, under a \$392,000 cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Pennsylvania Agricultural Experiment Station, State College.

The gypsy moth is a threat to

forests and ornamental trees in the Northeast.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will provide \$370,00 and the Experiment Station an additional \$22,000 for the 2½-year study, which may help minimize problems of environmental pollution caused by

the insect and by pesticides used against the pest.

Gypsy moth caterpillars defoliate about 400,000 acres of trees annually in the Northeast, and are spreading to other areas. Evergreens can be killed by a single defoliation, and susceptible hardwoods, such as oak, birch, and apple trees, can be killed by two defoliations.

ARS scientists reported discovery of the chemical identity of the gypsy moth's sex lure last November, then synthesized the natural attractant, which they named disparlure.

In Pennsylvania areas infested by gypsy moths, experiment station scientists led by Dr. E. Alan Cameron, station entomologist, will develop techniques for using disparlure to suppress the pest. Traps baited with disparlure will be distributed in areas of low infestations to determine if male moths are trapped in sufficient numbers to significantly reduce the number available to mate with female moths. Success of the traps would drastically reduce or almost eliminate the next generation of caterpillars, which is the damaging stage rather than the adult moths.

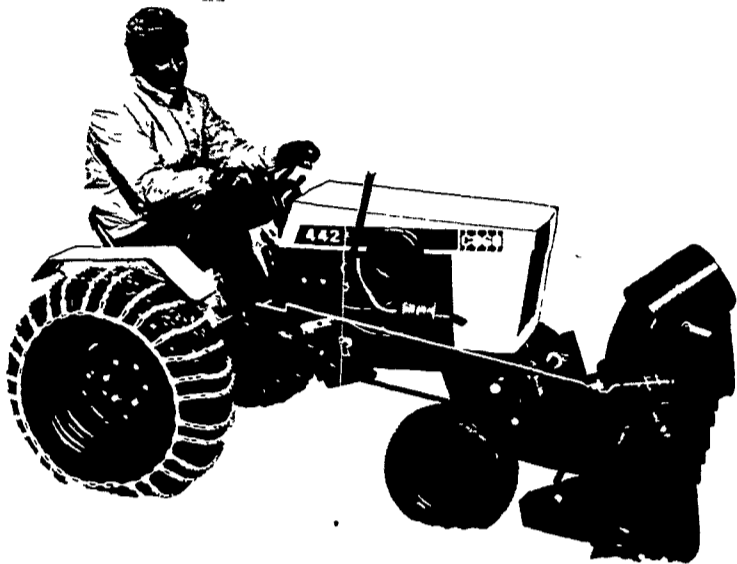
In another phase of the study, both sparse and dense infestations will be exposed to

broadcast applications of disparlure. This treatment may so confuse males seeking female moths that the males will die in exhaustion before locating mates. Laboratory studies under

more precisely controlled conditions will also be made.

Dr. H C Cox, Director of the ARS Entomology Research Division, will represent USDA in this project.

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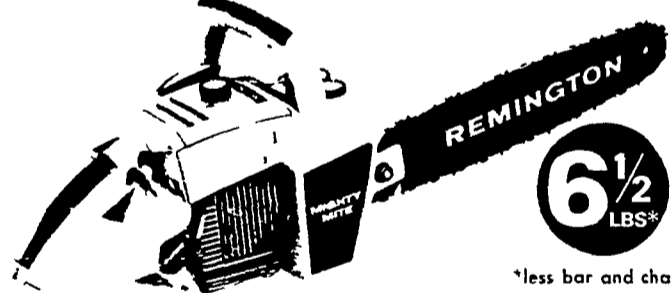
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