

Gypsy Moth fight continues in Pa. & Md.

REFTON — While tree toll reports due to the 1981 attack of the Gypsy Moth continue to mount in

Pennsylvania and Maryland, residents who lived through the latest invasion angrily and loudly

begin to look toward next year's war on the forest pest.

Such was the case Tuesday night at the Refton Fire Hall in southern Lancaster County at a public meeting called by State Rep. Gibson E. Armstrong.

Two principal factors emerged, which complicated this year's Gypsy Moth spraying program, and which will be at the center of attention next year.

First is the lack of financial commitment of public officials to the problem, particularly at the state level.

Second is a lack of good communication between officials and residents who are directly affected by spraying.

Representative Armstrong laid out the official problem at the age-old double step of the difference in concerns between metropolitan and rural areas of the state. The fight at the state level for funding is difficult, he said, because cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia do not identify with the problem.

"We talk about gypsy moths," Armstrong said, "and they talk about welfare."

"If there was some way to feed gypsy moths to welfare recipients, we could solve our problem."

Concerning the lack of good communication concerning spraying, Linda Reekie, assistant Lancaster County planner who served as Gypsy Moth coordinator, explained that local coordinators would be appointed next year to improve communication between residents and officials.

Residents were asked to contact The Lancaster County Commissioners Office to pinpoint locations of highly infested areas. Also, residents wishing to have their properties considered for spraying next year are asked to contact the office by October 1.

At the center of considerable controversy was the 500-foot DER regulation concerning spraying. Some residents expressed anger at the regulation that if a person objects to spraying, land 500 feet on either side will not be sprayed, too.

Residents asked how they can be sure their property will be sprayed, particularly if a neighbor objects.

Those at the meeting were urged to apply pressure on the legislature and other officials to appropriate money for next year's spraying program.

The Gypsy Moth toll in Pennsylvania has been set at three million acres of forestland in 40 counties and at some 7,000 acres in Cecil, Harford and Baltimore counties of Maryland.

"Adverse effects from this year's record defoliation should only be temporary in nature," according to James O. Nichols, chief of Pa. DER's Division of Forest Pest Management.

"Defoliated hardwoods are beginning to develop new leaves," he said.

"Although some trees, mostly conifers, have been killed the overall mortality rate should be relatively light, thanks to the abundant rainfall which has aided

refoliation."

Nichols explained that the best pest control can be achieved by building more pest-resistant forests.

"Until then, DER is obligated to assist those people who live in forested areas from being overrun by caterpillars."

"A limited spraying program is necessary, but the funds were lacking this year and many properties had to be eliminated from the 1981 spraying program. We must find some way to correct this in 1982 or the human misery will be compounded."

In Maryland, some 5,000 traps have been distributed by the Department of Agriculture to determine the spread of the moth.

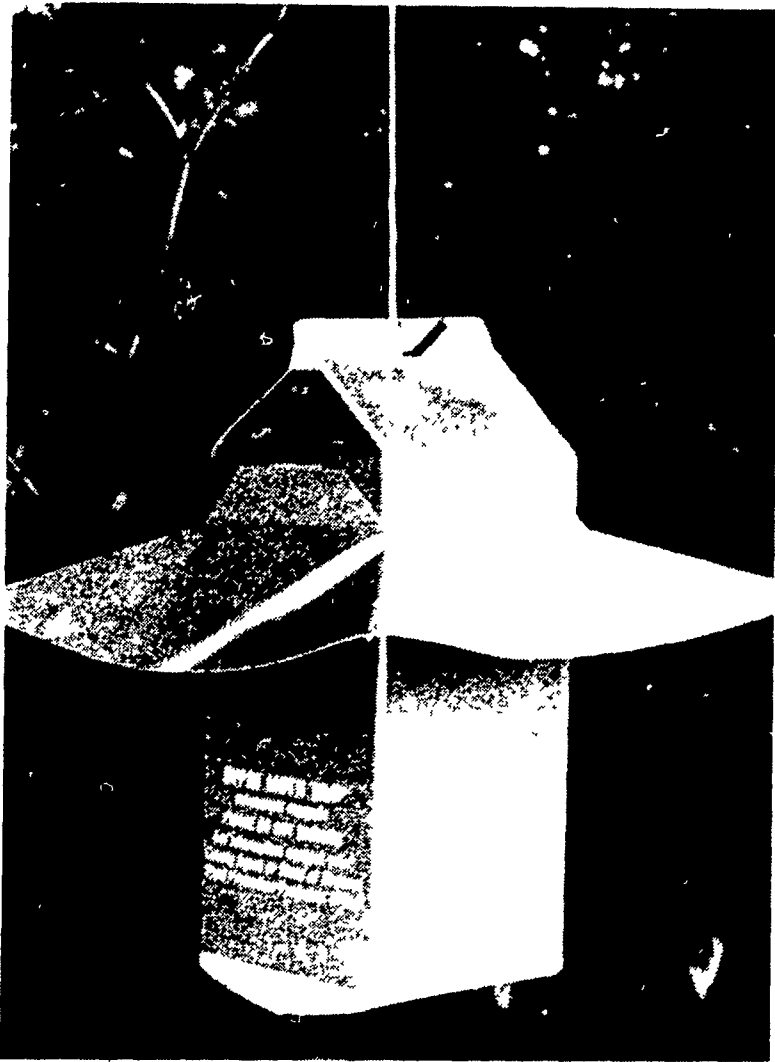
"The traps are being used as a measurement tool to accurately determine population levels and spread of the insect," explained Paul Bystrak, who heads the MDA's Gypsy Moth control program.

The traps are baited with a sex scent to attract male gypsy moths during the July breeding season. The traps were placed the end of June and will be retrieved in August.

In Cecil County and all counties west of the Chesapeake Bay, the traps are set on a two square kilometer grid pattern. On the Eastern Shore from Kent County down, the traps are set on a six square kilometer grid pattern.

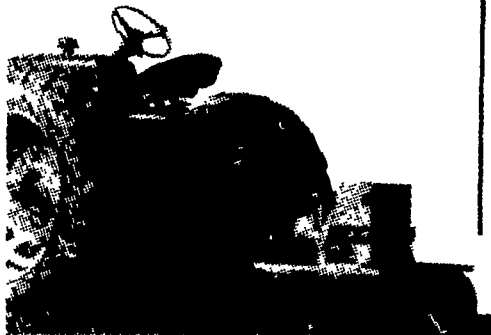
"Based on the number of male moths we find in the traps compared with our earlier records, we

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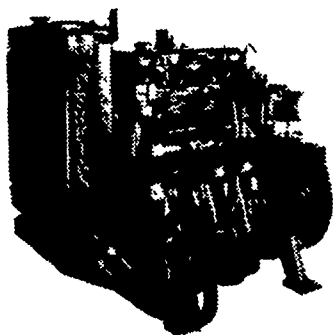


This is a Gypsy Moth survey trap, some 5,000 of which have been deployed throughout Maryland this summer by the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Gypsy Moth Control Section. Anyone finding one of the bright-green traps is asked to leave it undisturbed.

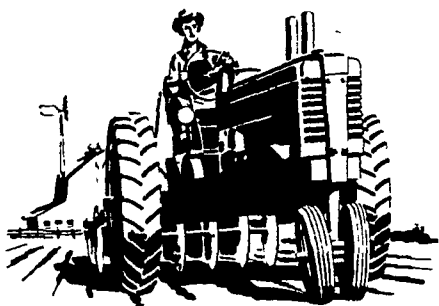
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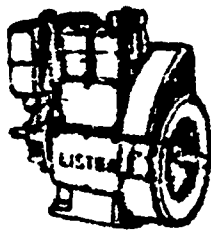
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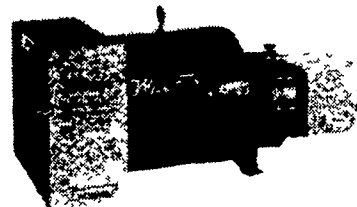
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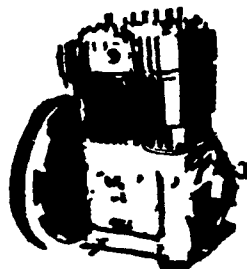
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