

CRAFT CORNER

Creature comforts

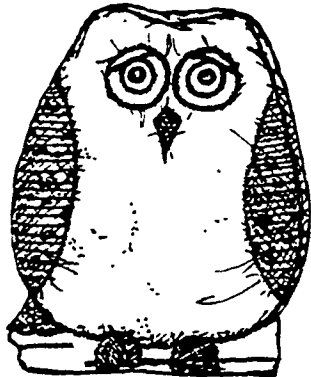
Pillows, shaped like owls, frogs and other critters are simple to make, but far more fun than conventional cushions.

The pillows are a combination of applique and simplified quilting. They require fabric scraps, polyester batting and minimum of drawing skills.

In other words, if you can copy the simple owl pictured above, you'll have no trouble making a "creature" pillow. Here are directions:

FABRICS: Scraps of felt, broadcloth, duck or any medium-weight, non-stretch fabric. Choose a solid color for the body of the pillow and contrasting solids or prints for the appliques.

OTHER MATERIALS: Polyester batting; unbleached muslin, measuring about 13x16 inches; paper, pencil and ruler; scissors; zig-zag sewing machine or embroidery thread.



UNIVERSITY PARK — Forest scientists of the Ag Experiment Station at Penn State, have discovered that gypsy moths either like or dislike the needles of

PATTERNS: 1. Cut paper to 12x15 inches. This will be the size of your finished pattern. 2. For the owl body, draw an egg shape that is cut off at the top. 3. Under the owl's body, draw a branch for him to sit on, and talons to let him grasp the branch. 4. Cut wings, branch, talons, tail, beak, eyelids, and eyes. Note: Eyes are 1/2 inches, 1 1/2 inches, and 2 1/2 inch circles in black, blue and white.

PILLOW FRONT: 1. Place pillow front, right side up, over polyester batting and unbleached muslin. 2. Arrange wings, branch, talons, tail, beak, eyes, and eyelids on top. 3. Baste all pieces in place, stitching through all thicknesses. 4. Using zig-zag sewing machine or hand embroidery, stitch pieces to pillow front with a wide satin stitch. 5. Embroider extra details as desired, such as the "cracks" in the owl's branch.

PILLOW ASSEMBLY: 1. With right sides together, stitch pillow front to pillow back. Leave opening at bottom for turning. 2. Turn pillow to right side. 3. Stuff pillow lightly. 4. Sew opening shut with tiny blind stitches.

Certain Douglas fir trees repel gypsy moth larvae

Douglas fir trees, depending upon the aroma of sap in the needles.

The studies found that gypsy moths do not like the flavor of Douglas fir trees grown from seed originating in Colorado, Arizona, or New Mexico.

On the other hand, Douglas fir trees grown from seed originating in British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, or Montana are like "cake and ice cream" to gypsy moth larvae, according to Edgar H. Palpant, research assistant in forestry at Penn State. He noted that the "larvae really devour needles from these strains."

Palpant said Douglas fir plantings in Pennsylvania alone are currently worth over 75 million dollars. This shows the value of planting trees from seeds originating in Arizona, Colorado, or New Mexico, he added.

The trees repelled by gypsy moths are the bluish-colored strains common in the southern range of Douglas fir country. Strains damaged by the larvae are the gray variety common to areas of the Pacific Northwest.

"There is strong evidence showing that a series of substances called terpenes — part of the liquid mixture that makes up the sap in evergreen trees — attract gypsy moth larvae," he stated. "Very small amounts escape from the needles and act as a perfume," he added.

Palpant believes, meanwhile, that some terpenes must be repulsive to the gypsy moth larvae.

Larvae of the gypsy moth normally prefer the leaves in oak-hickory forests. However, the larvae move into nearby Christmas tree plantations in epidemic years of gypsy moth outbreaks when the leaves of oaks and hickories have all been devoured.

The Penn Staters first noticed the peculiar feeding choice of gypsy moths in 1980 when very young larvae — sucked into a closed greenhouse through the ventilating system — were deposited randomly among young Douglas fir seedlings. It was obvious that only the seedlings from certain geographic origins were being eaten.

Then Paul Heller and David Shetlar of Penn State's Department of Entomology were brought in to verify and expand the observations and measurements. Their analysis continued to point to gypsy moth preference for plants from Pacific Northwest seed origins.

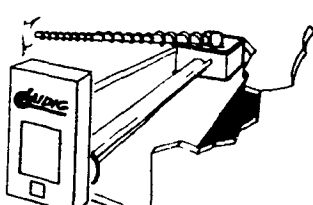
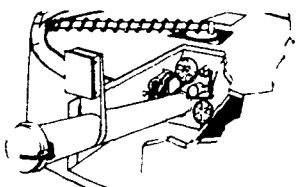
At the advice of Heller and Shetlar, Palpant and student assistants trapped a large number of gypsy moth larvae and put them in nylon mesh cages containing three assortments of Douglas fir trees. Seedling trees predicted to be "susceptible" were in one cage. A second cage contained trees thought to be "resistant," and the third cage held a mixture of seedling trees from all sources.

Two forestry students — Kimberly A. Marshall of Pittsburgh and John W. Washington of Riverton, NJ — kept track of the larvae behavior. The results were identical to those in earlier experiments. Needles on Pacific Northwest seed-source plants were devoured while those originating in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico were not eaten.

"Our research should serve as guide to Christmas tree growers in managing Douglas fir plantations," Palpant commented. "If susceptible varieties are grown in the future — because of other favorable traits — then growers will know they must spray with insecticides."

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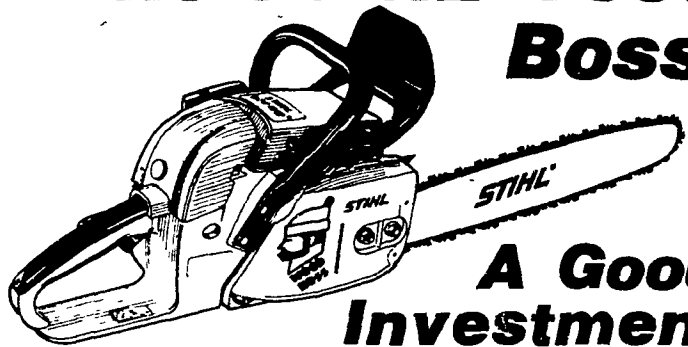
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