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Gypsy moth areas revised

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S.D.A. plant protection officials are revising the areas regulated for the tree-defoliating gypsy moth to keep it from spreading to new parts of the country.

Bert Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the revisions reflect changes in the spread and distribution of the moth during the 1983 summer season when gypsy moth caterpillars defoliated about 3 million acres, down from 8 million in 1982. The changes also reflect eradication efforts on infestations distant from the generally infested northeastern states.

Hawkins said gypsy moth regulations designate areas "high-risk" and "low-risk." The level of risk reflects the moth population and the possibility of people accidentally carrying gypsy moth egg masses, caterpillars, pupae or adults to uninfested areas.

Because egg masses have reached a level of 50 per acre, areas in Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia that were low-risk have been redesignated high-risk.

Previously non-regulated areas in Maryland have been designated high-risk.

"Surveys have shown the gypsy moth has moved to some areas isolated from the general infestation, often 'hitchhiking' on such items as outdoor household goods, recreational vehicles and mobile homes," Hawkins said. "As a result, previously non-regulated areas in California, Maryland, Washington and West Virginia have been designated low-risk."

Under USDA rules, regulated articles may move freely between high-risk and low-risk areas, and, unless an inspector determines otherwise, between low-risk and non-regulated areas. However, regulated articles and products must be inspected, treated if necessary, and certified free of the pest if they are moved from high-risk to non-regulated areas.

Homeowners moving from designated high-risk areas must certify their household items are free of the insect, or hire a professional pest control expert to do it for them. If during transit or upon arrival, inspectors find any life stages of gypsy moths, the owner may be fined up to \$1,000.

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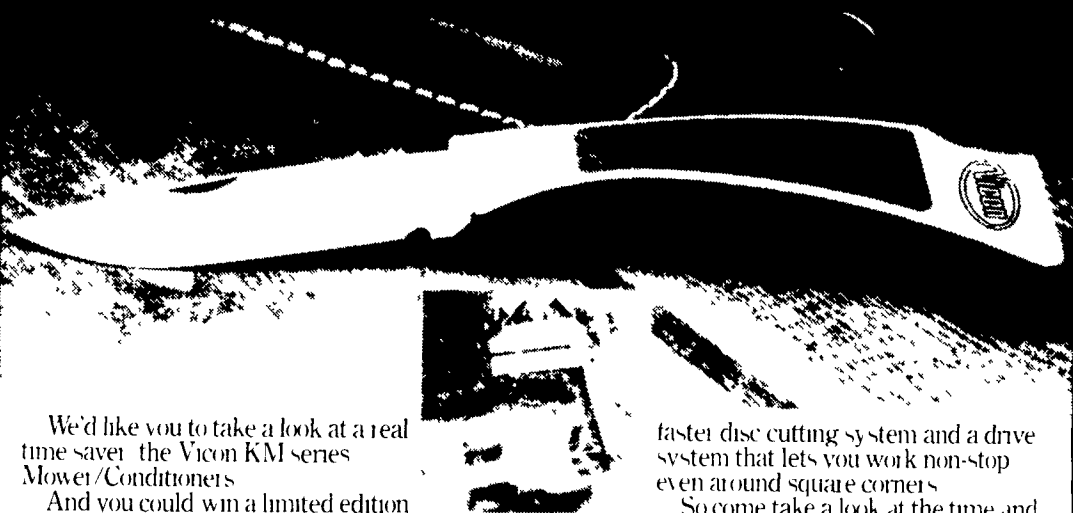
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