



COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) — chemicals commonly present in refrigerants, industrial cleansers, and aerosols — escape and slowly rise to that portion of the earth's atmosphere known as the stratosphere.

As CFCs are degraded by sunlight, the resulting chemicals react with and deplete the ozone layer that absorbs harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

The burning by Earth's occupants of fossil fuels for energy releases carbon dioxide and other "greenhouse" gases. These gases are believed to trap excess heat radiated from the Earth's surface, leading to global warming.

Debate continues nationally as to the speed and extent of these global threats. But how will global warming, or the destruction of Earth's natural ozone "sun-screens," affect the plants that support human existence?

A 40 percent depletion in the earth's protective ozone layer would decrease the yield of usable pulpwood from loblolly pines by 30 percent, said Dr. Joseph Sullivan, researcher at the University of Maryland. Sullivan uses suspended sun lamps to simulate the increased ultraviolet radiation reaching the earth's surface because of ozone depletion. Loblolly pines supply two-thirds of U.S. wood pulp. Photo by Norman E. Pruitt, Maryland Agriculture Experiment Station.

Ozone layer depletion will have significant effects on plant life, according to Dr. Alan Teramura at the University of Maryland. Teramura's greenhouse and field tests indicate that a 40 percent decrease in ozone, and the resultant increase in ultraviolet radiation, would decrease the pulpwood available from loblolly pines by 30 percent. Photo by Norman E. Pruitt, Maryland Agriculture Experiment Station.



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