

# Washington

## Gypsy moths thick in Seattle

WSDA also traps dreaded Asian variety

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — The Washington State Department of Agriculture has trapped 42 gypsy moths this year, including 21 of the European variety on Seattle's Capitol Hill, a densely populated residential district.

The 42 also include 10 Asian gypsy moths, which are considered more threatening to forests and orchards than European moths. WSDA hadn't snared an Asian gypsy moth since 1999.

The discoveries may present WSDA with challenges. Spraying pesticides over Seattle neighborhoods to eradicate gypsy moths has drawn organized opposition in the past. WSDA did not spray on Capitol Hill after trapping six moths last summer.

Meanwhile, Asian gypsy moths were found at two ports and several other places this summer. They're more mobile and eat a wider variety of trees and shrubs than European moths and pose a major threat to urban,



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

A gypsy moth trap hanging from a tree at the Port of Kalama along the Lower Columbia River in southwest Washington sways in the wind Aug. 18. The Washington State Department of Agriculture has trapped 42 gypsy moths this year, including 21 of the European variety on Seattle's Capitol Hill.

suburban and rural landscapes, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

WSDA spokesman Mike Louisell said Wednesday that the department has traps to collect in northwest Washington, but the trapping season is nearly over. The agency likely will decide by the end of the year on a spring spraying program, he said.

"We're just looking at the scope at what we have before us, and the challenge to respond,"

he said. The caterpillars emerge in the spring to feast on leaves. European gypsy moths have defoliated hundreds of thousands of acres in the Eastern U.S. and Great Lakes region.

Asian gypsy moths aren't established in the U.S.

WSDA has sprayed 93 times since 1979 to eradicate gypsy moths. Most large applications have been done from the air.

The department last spring

sprayed 220 acres in rural southwest Washington with *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, commonly referred to as Btk and sold under the name Foray. WSDA had trapped 16 gypsy moths and found an egg mass in the area the previous summer and fall.

WSDA hunted in Capitol Hill for coin-sized egg masses to confirm a reproducing population, but did not find any.

WSDA sprayed 725 acres in the Seattle neighborhoods of Ballard and Magnolia in 2000. A King County judge denied a request by a group of residents to stop the application.

Besides the 21 moths found on Capitol Hill, WSDA has trapped European gypsy moths in Jefferson County, Pierce County, two in Clark County, four in Thurston County and three more in King County.

WSDA caught Asian gypsy moths at the Port of Tacoma, Port of Vancouver, Tacoma neighborhood Norpoint, Gig Harbor in Kitsap County, Milton and Fife Heights in Pierce County, Hawks Prairie near Olympia, Nisqually in Thurston County, and two in Kent in King County.



Courtesy of Columbia Basin College Foundation

Fields of Grace workers harvest peppers at Columbia Basin College's research plot Oct. 6 in Pasco, Wash. The college is partnering with the gleaning operation to donate the peppers to a local food bank.

## College donates research peppers to food bank

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

ONLINE  
columbiabasin.edu

More than 3,000 pounds of peppers raised for research at an Eastern Washington college have been donated to a local food bank.

The agriculture department at Columbia Basin College in Pasco, Wash., partnered with the gleaner group Fields of Grace to harvest the peppers. They were distributed to needy families Oct. 14 at the St. Vincent de Paul food bank in Pasco.

The college planted the chili peppers to compare the characteristics of several varieties.

Tim Woodward, dean of agriculture education, research and development at the college, said he wants to develop a sweeter, less spicy chili pepper.

Some bell, jalapeno and habanero peppers are pro-

duced in the area, but pepper acreage is relatively small, Woodward said.

"It would be a way of making some money on a smaller acreage," he said.

The college's agriculture club could eventually grow peppers to roast and sell, Woodward said.

This is the college's first donation to the food bank.

"A lot of times in a breeding effort, we throw away whatever we don't use," Woodward said. "It makes sense to go ahead and donate it."

"(The peppers) were really a welcome sight," said Alissa Watkins, director of philanthropy for the CBC Foundation and founder of Fields of Grace. "People were saying, 'More, more.'"

## Experts study risk of spreading apple maggots

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — Three experts are studying whether yard waste from apple maggot-infested areas can be sent to compost manufacturers in pest-free zones without threatening Washington state's \$2 billion apple industry.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture contracted for the study in September, two months after state inspectors found apple maggot larvae at PacifiClean Environmental's composting plant in Grant County.

PacifiClean operates at

Ovenell Farms in Quincy and has a contract to take some of Seattle's yard and food waste. The center opened in February to manufacture compost sold to commercial farms as a soil amendment.

A WSDA permit allowing PacifiClean to import waste from quarantine areas imposed conditions to reduce the risk of introducing apple maggots to the area.

"We tried some things, and there was some concern those measures weren't enough," WSDA spokesman Hector Castro said.

PacifiClean has stopped

taking unprocessed organic waste from quarantined areas. It also has delayed constructing a 15,000-square-foot building to sort the waste, pending the outcome of the study, said Ryan Leong, the compost center's general manager.

WSDA will pay for the \$150,000 study from a grower-funded program to prevent the spread of apple maggots. Victor Mastro of Cotuit, Mass., and Jim Reynolds of Fort Collins, Colo., will tour compost centers. Plant scientist Claire Sansford of York, England, will compile the report, which is due by the end of March.



Courtesy of Washington State Department of Agriculture

The Washington State Department of Agriculture has hired three experts to pin down how to keep Western Washington's organic waste from spoiling the state's apple industry by bringing apple maggots to Eastern Washington.

## WSDA tour program seeks to connect local farmers, buyers

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

The Washington State Department of Agriculture wants to bring farmers and prospective institutional food buyers together.

The agency recently held a buying mission tour in Spokane County. The tour included several farms, a food distribution hub and a food service kitchen.

Following the tour, farmers and buyers connected through one-on-one "speed dating" style conversations.

The program is designed to help specialty crop growers interested in entering direct markets.

The tour and program is about "learning more about the markets by talking with buyers directly, and by having buyers learn from farmers di-

rectly," said Laura Raymond, commerce specialist with the department's small farm direct marketing program.

Consumers are demanding local food more often, Raymond said.

The buyers need to learn how to source their food locally, and to identify the farm it comes from, she said.

Local sourcing can look different for restaurants, grocery stores or institutions.

"It can be really challenging for a farmer to sell into those markets, because they may have a lot of experience with one direct market, but the requirements are all going to be very different from each other," Raymond said.

Raymond advises farmers to know the market they're interested in, and think about ways they can prepare to talk with a potential buyer. Grocery

stores and other retail outlets appreciate in-store marketing materials farmers can use to explain their products to customers, she said.

All buyers are interested in, but not necessarily used to, seasonal product availability.

"For farmers to be able to help explain and prepare their buyers for what they're likely to have at any point in the year early on can go a long ways for a successful relationship," Raymond said.

Organic farmer John Crow's Estella Farms in Deer Park, Wash., was one of the stops on the tour. Crow said he would participate in the tour again.

"(Local organic farmers) are competing with each other for a handful of organic eaters," Crow said. "The only way we can survive is to double, and triple the number of organic eaters out there."



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**WSU TRI-CITIES CAMPUS** **Tuesday, Oct. 20**  
5:30-7:00 p.m. East Auditorium

**WSU PULLMAN CAMPUS** **Wednesday, Oct. 21**  
4:10-5:30 p.m. Todd Hall, room 133

**WSU SPOKANE CAMPUS** **Thursday, Oct. 22**  
1:30-2:15 p.m. Spokane Academic Center, room 20  
2:30-3:15 p.m. Spokane Academic Center, room 20

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