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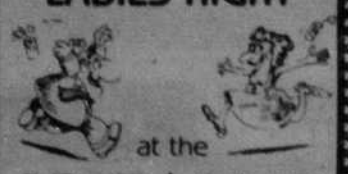
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State officials optimistic about gypsy moth spraying program

By Kim Kaady
Of the Emerald

The low-flying helicopters are gone, but is the gypsy moth?

Experts won't be sure until fall, but despite the capture of 31 male moths so far this summer, state Agriculture Department officials are anticipating success in the battle to eradicate the pesty insect.

Since three applications of the insecticide Bacillus thuringiensis (B.t.) were sprayed over 227,000 acres this spring, samples of gypsy moth populations have been taken to determine the program's effectiveness.

Evidence suggests that at least a few moths survived the spraying, but the data isn't conclusive, said Dalton Hobbs, an Agriculture Department spokesman.

Eight adult male moths have been trapped in Douglas County, an area previously free of infestation. In response to the discovery, officials have increased trap density in the area from one trap per square mile to 16 traps per square mile, said Leonard Kunzman, Agriculture Department director.

In the heavily infested Hawkins Heights area of Eugene, a single new gypsy moth egg mass was found, indicating this season's egg-laying has begun. Officials are testing the mass to determine whether fertilization has taken place.

The findings are not unexpected, but it is still too early to judge the success of the project, Hobbs said. A final evaluation must wait until the moths emerge from the last of three pupal stages as adults in mid-September, Hobbs said.

The male moths are attracted to the traps by a substance called Dipalure, which contains the same chemical that female moths release during mating season.

Since 16,000 traps were set in Lane County to monitor the moth populations, three adult male moths have been found southeast of Eugene on Old Dillard Road, and a single male moth was found north of Creswell.

Despite the attempts to keep the insect from invading new territory, single adult male moths also were found in two separate traps in the Portland area.

John Mellott, program director for the $11-million irradication project, said he is hoping for a 100 percent success rate, but admitted B.t. is not a foolproof solution to the gypsy moth problem.

"B.t. has never been demonstrated before to completely eradicate entire populations of gypsy moths, but it has never before been sprayed in three consecutive applications," Mellott said.

B.t. is a naturally occurring biological insecticide, which means it is present in small doses in the environment. Unlike synthetic chemical insecticides, which are absorbed through the skin of many insects, B.t. acts only upon a specific class of insects that includes gypsy moths.

Nationally, the foliage-destroying insect has caused an estimated $272 million in damage since 1980. Timber losses alone totaled $72 million in 1981. In its caterpillar stage, a large population of gypsy moths can strip a tree of its foliage overnight.

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Law school applications up

By Kirsten Bolin
Of the Emerald

Increased recruiting efforts are paying off for the University School of Law as the number of applicants for this fall rose 3 percent after last year's 20 percent decline.

"We've increased our efforts, particularly after last years's decline," says Marilyn Bradetich, law school admissions director.

The law school has received about 850 applications for 1985-86, up from 825 in 1984-85. Last year's total was a 20 percent decrease from the more than 1,000 applications received in 1983-84.

Intensified efforts include sending law school recruiters to law fairs and forums across the country, Bradetich says. University representatives will be recruiting in California, New York and the Midwest as well as throughout Oregon this year, she says.

Trying to reach students through these law recruitment forums is better than recruiting at individual schools because of the wider range of potential applicants they attract, she says.

"Law recruitment forums are there to attract older students as well," Bradetich says. Many of the potential applicants are looking to law school for a future career move, she says.

The overall decline in applicants over the last two years has not affected enrollment at the law school because the number of applicants has always greatly exceeded the number of students accepted, Bradetich says. Of the 850 applications received this year, the law school is planning on a class of about 170, she says.

Law school application numbers are down across the country, which she attributes to the increased number of students majoring in business and the sciences. Students today often see a degree in a technical field as being more marketable than one in liberal arts, she says.

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