

# ST. JOHNS REVIEW

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North Portland's Community Newspaper Serving: Arbor Lodge, Bridgeton, Cathedral Park, East Columbia, Hayden Island, Kenton, Overlook, Piedmont, Portsmouth, St. Johns, University Park  
TWITTER: @stjohnsreview - EMAIL: reviewnewspaper@gmail.com - WEB: www.stjohnsreview.com - PO Box 83068, Port. OR 97283 - 503-283-5086 - A Bi-Weekly community newspaper

## Gypsy Moths discovered in St. Johns & Forest Park; Eradication plan being formed

Invasive Asian gypsy moths were discovered in traps in St. Johns and Forest Park last fall in spite of efforts to remove them from foreign vessels visiting the Port of Portland, according to Clint Burfitt of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). Burfitt said a closely related species, the European gypsy moth, was also discovered. It is likely there are more than just those trapped.

This is an alarming find since both invasive species feed on native evergreen and hardwood trees and can defoliate them leaving barren, dead snags in their wake. The danger of an infestation is frightening since the two species of gypsy moths can interbreed, reproduce exponentially and adjust their diet to new plants, traits which have

spurred huge, destructive infestations in the eastern US. The invasive moths also have the ability to push out native species of butterflies and moths. If the pests get out of control and an infestation occurs, a quarantine of nursery plants would become necessary. Such an action would harm local businesses such as plant nurseries and Christmas tree farms.

According to Mark Hitchcox, a St. Johns neighbor and insect scientist, gypsy moths have a population explosion about every 10 years in their native lands, particularly Russia. During such an event, it becomes very challenging to find and remove all the egg masses on vessels and goods arriving in the US, though the ODA says they get about 99% of them arriving in Oregon.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has successfully addressed gypsy moth invasions with swift action to eradicate the caterpillars by overhead spraying of Btk, a naturally occurring bacterial protein that is considered safe for organic gardens. According to Clint Burfitt, the ODA feels the threat is real and the time to act is now. "We want to get the treatment effort started early and effectively," he said. To be effective, they would like to focus on three overhead sprayings one week apart starting in April. The focus area will be St. Johns north of the bridge, northern Forest Park and part of Vancouver, Washington where the moths were found. A large number of new pheromone traps that attract males will then be set out within the focus area and several miles around the perimeter



to track the effect.

Unfortunately, spraying will affect other butterflies and moths that have the same life cycle timing as the gypsy moth. Xerxes has said that no endangered species will be affected, however. According to studies done at Oregon State University, loss of non-target butterfly and moth species will usual-

ly be made up within two years as populations recolonize. Spraying doesn't affect honeybees, dragonflies, flies or other insects. When the caterpillars consume Btk on foliage it works by changing the PH of their system so they cannot feed. A study of more detailed effects of spraying on other butterfly and moth species will be conducted in the focus area by ODA insect scientist, Dianne Kerns and OSU professor, Jeff Miller, an expert on butterflies.

The Oregon Invasive Species Council can provide advanced notification to let residents know when spraying will occur if they sign up to receive notifications at the following link: [www.oregon-invasivespeciescouncil.org/agm](http://www.oregon-invasivespeciescouncil.org/agm). There is also information on the website about what you should do during a spray.

Oregon Health Authority website says that on the application dates, people in the spray zones will

see and hear (loud) aircraft flying above. Potentially they may fly very low. They suggest that if you or someone in your home is concerned about the application due to a medical condition, to consult with a health care provider.

Currently, the Oregon Department of Agriculture is open for 30-days of public feedback on the plan to eradicate gypsy moth larva. Besides the open houses that were held on February 17 and 20,



those interested can get involved in the effort through training in upcoming workshops at the St. Johns Community Center sponsored by the Oregon Forest Pest Detectors program (OFPD).

Visit the OFPD site to register, and take the online training: <http://us11.campaign-archive2.com/?u=f6320af8fb0948468efa9f291&id=7fb157b8f8#AGM>. **Then join one of the upcoming workshops to reinforce and test your knowledge:**  
February 26, 10:00am - 12:00pm at St. Johns Community Center  
February 27, 10:00am - 12:00pm at St. Johns Community Center  
March 4, 10:00am - 12:00pm at St. Johns Community Center

### Correction: Celebrate North Portland

In the last issue the Review said the Celebrate North Portland event is March 4. **IT IS NOT.** The fabulously popular event will be: **Saturday, March 12th at 6pm.** Deadline to buy tickets is March 4. See form on Page 8.

#### Facts about Btk

- *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki (Btk)* is a bacteria found in soil
- It was certified as organic by OMRI
- It has been shown to be safe for humans
- Although there is low risk to those with severely depressed immune systems.
- Btk affects kills caterpillars by altering the PH of their stomach
- It doesn't affect other insects.

**Enter**  
The Review's  
**PHOTO CONTEST!!**  
**Win \$100!!**

Send your photo of the St. Johns Bridge to: [reviewnewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:reviewnewspaper@gmail.com) **TODAY!!**

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**Congratulations:**  
*This issue's Masthead was taken by Heather Bilyeu and she is officially entered into the contest to win \$100 at the end of the year.*  
**SEND YOUR BRIDGE PHOTO in today.**  
*See page 2 for full details.*