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GYPSY MOTHS!!!

It is that time of year again. UGH.

The following information comes from "Here's how you can help control Gypsy Moth this summer." published by the PA Gypsy Moth Task Force.

The Gypsy Moth was brought to New England from Europe in 1869 as part of a silk-making experiment. Some of the larvae escaped, and the Gypsy Moth has been an increasing problem in the United States ever since.

Gypsy Moth Facts

- Newly hatched caterpillars are easily windblown to previously unaffected areas.
- A mature caterpillar can consume several leaves per day.
- Gypsy Moths currently infest all of New England, parts of Canada, and are rapidly expanding in the Middle Atlantic States.
- Birds, squirrels, mice, skunks, and snakes are the major predators of the Gypsy Moth. They are most effective when Gypsy Moth population are low.
- The Gypsy Moth cannot be eradicated with currently know techniques. It can only be controlled or suppressed.

- Generally, after two or three years, an infestation collapses due to overpopulation and an exhausted food supply, or buildup of parasites.

Four Options for Gypsy Moth Control

1. Area-wide spraying. Contact your county gypsy moth coordinator at your county commissioner's office, and ask if your property qualifies for the cooperative county and state aerial suppression program. [Editor's note: I do not know which states have a gypsy moth coordinator.]

2. Consider private spraying. A list of aerial spray applicators, acceptable insecticides and other data can be obtained from your county coordinator, any DER forester, or your county agriculture extension office. Private aerial spraying is expensive. Ground spraying contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages. May through early June is the best time for spraying.

NOTE: certain chemicals used by private applicators may be toxic to honey bees. Notify bee keepers in your area. Avoid spray drift and never use these chemicals on trees in bloom.

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