GYPSY MOTH
EUROPEAN AND ASIAN

NOT KNOWN TO
OCCUR IN IDAHO

Common Name: Gypsy moth, European Gypsy moth or Asian Gypsy moth

Scientific Name: *Lymantria dispar (* Linnaeus)

The gypsy moth was accidentally introduced into Massachusetts in l869. By 1902 this pest was widespread in the New England states, eastern New York, and regions of New Jersey. The gypsy moth was first detected in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties in northeastern Pennsylvania in l932. Pennsylvania's infestation progressed south and westward following the mountain ridges. During the late 1970s and early l980s the leading edge of the infestation advanced into adjacent states both west and south. Heavy defoliation and subsequent tree mortality has occurred along mountain ridges in forests comprised primarily of oak. It is the most important insect pest of forest and shade trees in the eastern United States.

Life History

The gypsy moth goes through four life stages: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa**,** and adult**.** It has one generation per year and overwinters in the egg stage. Each female lay 50-1,000 eggs in one mass covered by velvety golden or buff-colored hairs from the female's abdomen. The egg mass is about 0.75 inches wide and 1- 1.5 inches long and is attached to trees, logs, rocks, buildings, bird houses, and on outdoor household articles.

Hosts

Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on several hundred species of trees and shrubs. Preferred broad-leaved hosts include oak, apple, alder, aspen, filbert, willow, birch, madrone, cottonwood, and plum. Coniferous species such as Douglas fir, pine, and western hemlock are suitable hosts as well for the Asian Gypsy moth. Tree species not favored by the gypsy moth include ash, balsam, fir, catalpa, cedar, dogwood, sycamore, rhododendron, and tulip tree.

Damage

Vigorous hardwoods can usually survive one complete defoliation, but a similar attack may be fatal to conifers. Repeated defoliation of hardwoods, however, will reduce tree vigor to a point where other factors or pests may cause death. Tree losses have been noted after one to two years of complete defoliation during drought periods, particularly on poor sites. The aesthetic, recreational and watershed values of forest, park and ornamental trees can be seriously threatened by the gypsy moth. The hairs of the young larvae often cause a skin rash on humans.

Asian gypsy moth

The Asian strain of the gypsy moth, which belongs to the same species as the European gypsy moth, feeds upon more than 500 species of plants (USDA APHIS & Forest Service, 2000), including many conifers and hardwood species. Unlike the European strain, the female Asian gypsy moths have the ability to fly up to 40 miles (USDA Forest Service, 1991); this attribute would greatly accelerate dispersal and colonization if the moths were to escape.

The Asian gypsy moth has been introduced to Europe and has reached North America on both western and eastern seaboards several times as egg masses on ships (USDA APHIS & Forest Service, 2000). Each time, emergency control programs have succeeded in eradicating the moth. New introductions of Asian gypsy moth appear inevitable and established infestations would probably be extremely difficult to control.

Other Resources

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/gypsy_moth/index.shtml

http://ceris.purdue.edu/napis/pests/agm/

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_phasiangm.html

http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/default.htm

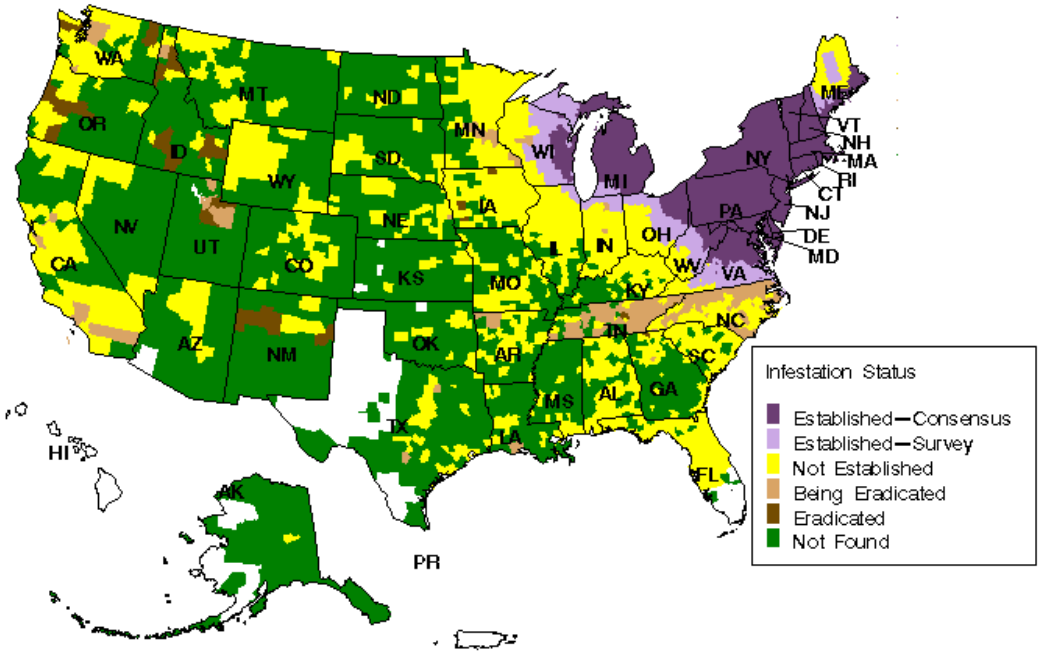
http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/ippm_gm_alert.shtml#Asian_gypsy_moths_

Reported Status of

Gypsy Moth (European) , Lymantria dispar

in US and Puerto Rico

Data retrieved from National Agricultural Pest Information System on 01/17/2012



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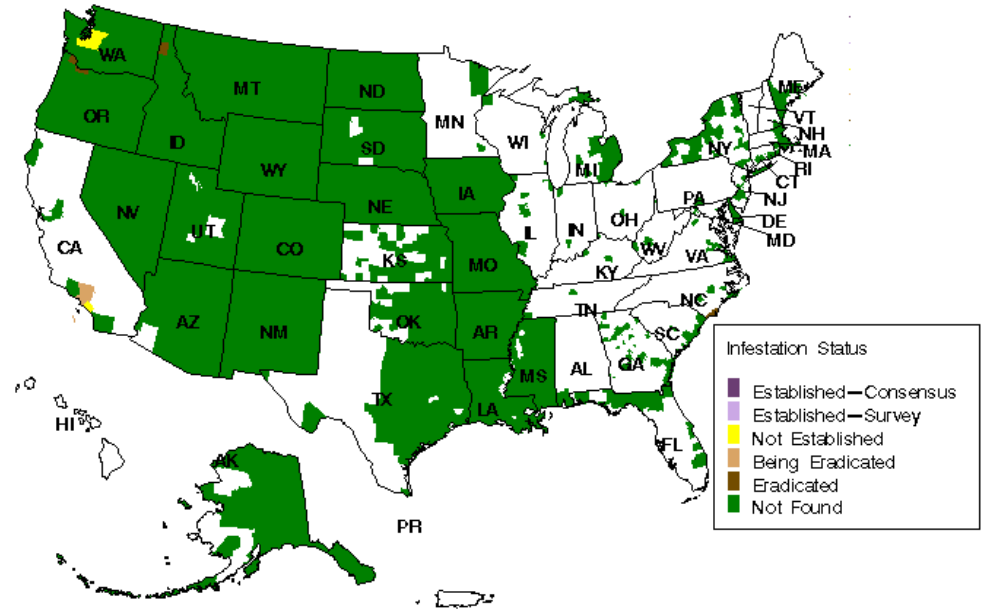
Reported Status of

Asian Gypsy Moth , Lymantria dispar asiatica

in US and Puerto Rico

Data retrieved from National Agricultural Pest Information System on 01/17/2012



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