



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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WSDA to hold open house Feb. 19 regarding Tukwila gypsy moth project

OLYMPIA - The [Washington State Department of Agriculture \(WSDA\)](#) will hold an open house Feb. 19 in Tukwila, site of a gypsy moth infestation detected this past summer. WSDA staff will be on hand to answer questions on its proposal to eliminate a population of [European gypsy moth](#), centered at Interurban Avenue South and South 149th Street.

Of the 27 gypsy moths caught in WSDA's trapping efforts last summer, 25 were found in Tukwila. Gypsy moth is a destructive forest pest and can also affect urban landscapes when the caterpillars feed on host trees, plants and shrubs.

The open house will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Tukwila Elementary School, 5939 S 149th St. Individuals are invited to drop in anytime during this period to get their questions answered one-on-one, look at displays on the invasive pest and view videos.

Gypsy moth has defoliated millions of acres of forest in recent years across the Northeast and Midwest. If left unchecked, gypsy moths could devastate Washington's forests. It has been detected in Washington every year since 1977, but permanent populations have not been established because of the state's aggressive trapping and eradication programs.

WSDA is proposing a two-step response to the detected gypsy moth population: eliminate gypsy moth caterpillars with ground-based treatments using a biological insecticide on trees and shrubs in a 10-acre area around the gypsy moth egg mass locations. This would be followed later by an aerial application of an agent (disparlure) that disrupts mating behavior in any remaining adult gypsy moths. The smaller ground operations would begin in late April or early May. To affect any adult gypsy moths present, WSDA would treat a 180-acre area in July by aircraft, releasing tiny pheromone-impregnated flakes. The synthetic flakes confuse male gypsy moths so they cannot locate female moths to mate with.

Visit www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/ for more information on WSDA's gypsy moth program or call the WSDA gypsy moth toll-free hotline at 1-800-443-6684.

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