



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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Gypsy moth eradication continues in Tukwila

OLYMPIA – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) plans to conduct an aerial flight in Tukwila in early July to release an insect pheromone intended to eradicate a population of gypsy moths discovered last year.

Gypsy moths are destructive pests that cause significant damage to forests and urban landscapes when the caterpillars feed on plants, shrubs and trees, including maple, alder, apple and poplar. The moth is established in 19 states in the East and upper Midwest, where it has caused millions of dollars in damage.

The synthetic pheromone is designed specifically to confuse male gypsy moths and prevent mating. In previous uses, it has been shown that it does not affect other species.

In May, WSDA completed four ground-spray applications of a biological insecticide at a site near South 149th Street and Interurban Avenue South in Tukwila. These earlier applications, at the core of the European gypsy moth infestation detected in 2012, were meant to kill newly hatched gypsy moth caterpillars.

“The broader follow-up mating disruption application in July is intended to prevent any small, undetected satellite populations of gypsy moth from becoming established,” said Jim Marra, acting manager of WSDA’s Pest Program. “The exact date and time of the flyover could be revised if necessary due to weather conditions.”

A WSDA contractor, Al’s Aerial Spraying of Michigan, will release tiny, pheromone-impregnated flakes from the airplane over a 180-acre site south of the Foster Golf Links ([map](#)). The flight will be conducted in early morning, possibly on July 8, and be completed by 7 a.m. The licensed applicator pilot will fly between 100 and 200 feet above the tree canopy.

WSDA trappers caught this most recent population of gypsy moths last summer, and also discovered several trees with viable gypsy moth eggs in Tukwila, leading to this year’s eradication effort.

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

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