



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: Jan. 12, 2011 (11-02)
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WSDA to hold gypsy moth open house in Puyallup Jan. 27

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) will hold an open house Jan. 27 in Puyallup, site of a gypsy moth infestation detected this past summer. WSDA staff will be on hand to answer questions on its proposal to conduct a biological insecticide treatment this spring at the South Hill Mall in Puyallup to eradicate the infestation.

Of the 13 gypsy moths caught in Washington trapping efforts last summer, seven were caught near the South Hill Mall. The gypsy moth is a destructive forest pest that attacks both deciduous and evergreen trees.

The open house will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Zeiger Elementary School gymnasium, 13008—94th Ave. E. in Puyallup. Individuals are invited to drop in anytime during this period.

The insecticide WSDA is proposing to use is *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk), a biological insecticide used in the past to keep gypsy moths out of Washington. Btk is registered for use in the U.S. by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is found naturally in the environment.

Before reaching a decision on the proposal, WSDA will comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). WSDA will consult with state and federal agencies, and prepare two documents for public review and comment that assess the impact of the proposal on the environment. The two documents are a SEPA checklist and a NEPA draft environmental assessment.

If the proposal is approved, three to five treatments, administered three to 14 days apart, will begin in late April or early May.

The gypsy moth has been detected in Washington state every year since 1977, but permanent populations have not been established because of WSDA's aggressive trapping and eradication programs.

For more information on WSDA's gypsy moth program, call the agency's toll-free hotline (1-800-443-6684) or visit the agency's website at <http://agr.wa.gov/Plantsinsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/>. The website includes a map of the proposed treatment site.

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