

26 Gypsy Moths Found in Northwest Bend Neighborhood

by Bend Weekly News Sources

More than two-dozen gypsy moths have been trapped in a northwest residential area of Bend, Oregon, indicating the likelihood of a breeding population of the moths in the area. Additional traps are being placed and will be checked regularly over the next several weeks. The 26 detections in Bend mark the highest number of gypsy moths trapped in one location in Oregon east of the Cascades.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) is now checking more than 19,000 gypsy moth traps that were placed statewide earlier this year. So far 28 detections reported for 2006 include the 26 in Bend, and two in Jackson County's Shady Cove.

The gypsy moth, first introduced into the United States in 1869 by a French scientist living in Massachusetts had its first outbreak in 1889. By 1987, the gypsy moth had firmly established itself throughout the Northeast. The insect has since spread south into Virginia and West Virginia, and west into Michigan. Infestations have also occurred in Utah, Oregon, Washington, California, and many other States outside the Northeast. The moth devours tree leaves, causing widespread defoliation that weakens and sometimes kills trees and shrubs.

Gypsy moths typically enter Oregon by hitching a ride on vehicles or outdoor household articles originating from infested areas of the United States, often as families relocate to Oregon from the eastern U.S. The two moths in Shady Cove were both found in or near a recreational vehicle park along the Rogue River in the middle of town. Recreational vehicles are also a known pathway by which gypsy moths can hitchhike to Oregon from infested states, usually as an egg mass attached to the recreational vehicle. Due to this risk, RV parks, campgrounds and rest areas statewide are trapped each year. Both sites-- Bend and Shady Cove--reported gypsy moth detections in 2005. ODA placed a high density of traps at both locations this year to determine if an infestation is established and to hopefully determine the source of the introductions. Last year, a total of nine gypsy moths were detected statewide at eight different sites. There were no eradication projects scheduled this spring for only the third time in the past 26 years. Early detection and eradication of gypsy moth infestations are goals of the Oregon Department of Agriculture to prevent economic and environmental losses to Oregon, either by restrictive quarantines on commodities or by the loss of foliage and even trees due to expanding gypsy moth populations. Traps will continue to be inspected until they are removed in September.