

Millions Of Acres Ravaged By Mini-Monster



GYPSY MOTH caterpillars defoliated almost 800,000 acres of woodland in eight northeastern states in 1970. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture estimates that approximately one-third of the 340 million acres of forests in the eastern U.S. could be destroyed if the gypsy moth is allowed to continue unchecked.

What is about two inches long, has about 20 legs, is covered with hair, is red with pink dots, and has filled over a million trees?

This critter hitchhikes with man from New England to such far away places as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Virginia, Texas, Florida and other distant states.

Last summer, this mini-monster denuded over 100,000 acres of forest in Northern New Jersey; the wildlife — birds, mammals, and even snakes — left the ravaged areas in droves, for they had no food, no nesting place and no shade.

Homeowners may be familiar with this unwanted wiggler — the gypsy moth caterpillar.

However, the gypsy moth wasn't always unwanted. It was actually imported into this country by a Massachusetts naturalist who

thought it might aid the silk industry.

Unfortunately, several moths escaped into the surrounding woodlands when their cage was destroyed in a windstorm.

During the 102 years that have since elapsed, voracious hordes of gypsy moth caterpillars have spread like a plague, chewing their way over millions of acres in the Northeast and have recently shown up in Midwestern states.

The gypsy moth causes damage on such a large scale that it is actually an "environmental pollutant."

A single caterpillar eats one square foot of leaf surface every 24 hours. Favorite meals for the gypsy moth include oak, maple, birch, willow, and poplar, but they will also feed on pine, spruce, other hardwoods, and evergreen trees.

Large infestations, containing millions of caterpillars, can easily strip the foliage of an entire forest in a few weeks.

Repeated defoliations will destroy valuable timberlands. The dead trees, in turn, increase fire hazards, permit

soil erosion and the runoff of precious water.

Wildlife habitats are destroyed and land values drastically reduced.

Recently, gypsy moths have been showing up in non-rural areas and have killed ornamental shrubs and trees.

Indoor Plants' Needs Vary

Three ingredients of success in the continuing health of indoor plants in a home or office are: light, humidity, and temperature.

The American Association of Nurserymen counsels that the amount of light required by an indoor plant depends on the type of plant, itself.

The garden center will recommend the density of light required for each plant. For some, the natural light available will suffice; others will

require additional illumination. The moisture, or humidity, required is usually less than the amateur indoor gardener might expect.

A "moisture meter" is a highly useful device for measuring this factor, and is available from most garden centers.

The happiest temperature for indoor plants is about 70 to 72 degrees, and offices or homes with a number of plantings should avoid changing the temperature significantly at night.

covered sidewalks, and gotten into homes, pools, stores, and buildings.

The primary source of spread today is the movement of mobile homes, camping trailers, and recreational vehicles to which the female moths have attached their egg masses.

Each mass contains from 100 to 1,000 potential caterpillars. It is easy to imagine how a camper might unwittingly carry egg masses outside of infested areas to begin a new infestation.

Fortunately, homeowners and communities can protect their property with applications of a pesticide known as cyfluthrin, sold commercially as Sevin. It is low in toxicity to humans, birds, fish and other wildlife.

Application is according with label directions will provide effective control of the gypsy moth.



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GIANT RED tomatoes were named vegetable of the year by seedsmen. The title was based on popularity among home gardeners.

Tomato Is 'Vegetable Of The Year'

When a beginner gardener first decides to plant a vegetable garden, the one vegetable he'll most likely start with is the tomato.

When a group of leading seedsmen, meeting at Penn. State University, Pennsylvania, were asked to name a "vegetable of the year," the giant red tomato won easily.

Tomatoes come in many shapes and sizes — some pear-shaped, others orange and yellow colored, some the size of cherries, but those that fall into the giant red category — such as beefsteak, big boy, better boy, Rutgers, whopper, early giant and delicious — are the most universally grown and the most productive.

Tomatoes grown from seed are best started about eight weeks before the last frost date, and transplanted into the garden after danger of frost.

It's difficult to fall with tomatoes once they're in the ground.

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