HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ILLINOIS GYPSY MOTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources
State Natural History Survey Division

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The Illinois Gypsy Moth Research and Education Program was initiated October 4, 1982 at the request of Governor James R. Thompson. One of the initial project goals was the development of a high-quality educational program on the gypsy moth for the citizens of Illinois. The concepts used in developing the educational portion of the Gypsy Moth Program were based on previous experiences reported by eastern states. Without question, the greatest flaw in gypsy moth control programs in the eastern states was the lack of public understanding of the gypsy moth and the control strategies used against it. In Illinois, we hope to avoid this problem through a varied and comprehensive educational program designed specifically for the people of Illinois.
Educational Achievements
A multi-image slide program entitled "The Gypsy Moth: A Threat to Illinois Trees" has been produced at the INHS and is now available for presentation to interested groups in Illinois. The program covers the history of the gypsy moth in the United States and its spread into Illinois. The impact of the gypsy moth on forests and the human population is discussed, and the life cycle of the insect is presented in detail. Emphasis is placed on the population dynamics of the gypsy moth and on natural mortality factors including weather, predators, parasitoids and disease. Factors which make an area susceptible to gypsy moth attack are examined, including the urban environment, which is especially susceptible. Tactics that an individual homeowner can employ to detect and manage the gypsy moth are covered, as well as area-wide strategies for control. The concept of Integrated Pest Management is stressed as the only viable alternative to complete reliance on chemical control. The program will be shown to interested organizations by one of the gypsy moth staff members. Because of its extreme flexibility, this program will continue to evolve as new information becomes available on the gypsy moth in Illinois. A brochure which describes the program is included in the rear of this pamphlet.
Equipment required for the production and presentation of the program includes a precision-aligned slide projector system, a microprocessor control unit, and an audio tape drive.
Several presentations were given by the gypsy moth staff to various individuals and organizations. These presentations included formal talks and/or tours of the facilities. Those attending included:

1) Chicago Citizens for a Better Environment (March),

2) Illinois Legislative Aids (May),

3) members of the Joint Meeting of the Illinois Department of Conservation and INHS (June),

4) Mr. John Floyd, Bureau of the Budget (September), and the

5) 'Principles of Insect Control' class from the U. of Illinois (October).

The multi-media slide show was (or will be) presented in 1983-84 to:

1) the annual Convention of the Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc. in Schaumburg, IL (April),

2) the staff of the INHS's Section of Economic Entomology Champaign, IL (May),

3) the annual meeting of the Department of Conservation, Forestry Division, in Springfield, IL (July),

4) the general public during the INHS's 125th Anniversary Open House, Champaign, IL (September),
5) the area meeting of the Boy Scouts of America in Darien, IL (October),

6) the Regional Convention of the Society of Interpretive Naturalists in Carbondale, IL (November),

7) the Illini State Park Nature Center, Marseilles, IL (January, 1984).

**TELEVISION**

In conjunction with the University of Illinois and DENR, we produced two television segments on the gypsy moth. One sequence dealt with the moth in Illinois and its potential impact on the state. This program was aired during half-time of a regionally televised University of Illinois' basketball game. The other production included a gypsy moth spot in a public service announcement for the INHS anniversary celebration.

**IDENTIFICATION MOUNTS**

To insure proper identification of the gypsy moth by state extension personnel, etc., display mounts containing freeze-dried specimens of all gypsy moth life stages are being produced. The specimens are life-like and can be replaced in the mount as they fade with age. Currently, these displays are held by the 35 district foresters in Illinois and by Illinois Department of Agriculture and Department of
Conservation personnel. Displays are being distributed to all county extension agents by University of Illinois Extension specialists in Entomology and to district foresters and municipalities which have had a history of gypsy moth problems by Illinois Department of Agriculture Plant Inspection personnel.

**GYPSY MOTH DISPLAYS**

Three displays depicting the life cycle of the gypsy moth and several of the biological control agents that reduce gypsy moth populations have been constructed. One is permanently housed in the foyer of the Natural Resources Building in Champaign. The second is a portable exhibit that accompanies the multi-media program (A). The third display was exhibited at the Illinois State Fair before being installed in the entrance foyer of the Illinois Department of Agriculture Building, Springfield (B).

(A). A portable display of the gypsy moth accompanies the multi-media program.
A permanent display is housed in the Illinois Department of Agriculture Building, Springfield.
An article on the gypsy moth appeared in the May-June issue of Illinois magazine. A detailed explanation of the biology of the gypsy moth was presented and the life stages were shown in color on the back cover. The susceptibility of Illinois forests to gypsy moth attack was briefly discussed along with tactics the homeowner may use to detect and combat gypsy moths.

The March-April issue of the Natural History Survey Reports contained an article on the history of the gypsy moth pheromone trapping program in Illinois. The information reported was provided to INHS scientists by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The INHS Reports has a circulation of 4500 and is sent to legislators, scientists, interested Illinois citizens and to libraries throughout the United States. Research findings on the gypsy moth will be featured in future articles.
Future Plans for Public Education
MULTI-MEDIA PROGRAM

The slide presentation on the gypsy moth will be converted from 35mm to superslide format to increase its flexibility and audience impact. Movie footage of severe gypsy moth infestations, filmed in Pennsylvania during 1983, may be incorporated into the program. We have also mailed numerous slide-show brochures to prospective agencies, municipalities and environmental groups throughout Illinois, and we anticipate conducting numerous workshops and programs on the gypsy moth during the coming year.

DISTRIBUTION OF IDENTIFICATION MOUNTS

Approximately 150 of the gypsy moth display mounts will be completed and distributed during 1984. All county extension agents, district foresters, and municipalities with gypsy moth infestations will then possess proper identification materials for gypsy moths. These mounts should prove an invaluable aid in the overall gypsy moth program in Illinois.

Identification mounts contain the various stages of the gypsy moth life cycle.
OTHER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

A 16-20 page color brochure on the gypsy moth is currently being produced for distribution in Illinois in early 1984. Information included in the brochure will closely parallel the slide program material, but will be presented in more detail. This pamphlet will provide homeowners with a ready source of reference material on the gypsy moth and its management in Illinois.

Also, we have designed a full-color poster which depicts the gypsy moth life stages and natural control factors which will be distributed to schools, nature centers and municipalities in Illinois. The poster should be ready for distribution by January, 1984.
THE GYPSY MOTH:
A THREAT
TO ILLINOIS TREES

A pamphlet describing the gypsy moth multi-media program and how to arrange for its presentation is made available to interested parties within Illinois.
The Illinois Gypsy Moth Research and Education Program was initiated October 4, 1982, at the request of Governor James R. Thompson after the 1981 gypsy moth trapping survey captured 2,634 male moths in 84 communities in 13 counties of Illinois. One of the goals of the project is to develop a high-quality educational program for the people of the state of Illinois so that they can learn to manage the gypsy moth on their property and in their community.

The Illinois Natural History Survey, a division of the Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources, is located in Champaign and maintains field stations in eight other locations throughout the state. Founded in 1858, the Illinois Natural History Survey has devoted its attention to the state’s living natural resources. The animal and plant life of Illinois is studied by staff scientists in order to determine ways to protect and intelligently use these resources.
The gypsy moth has been a serious problem in the United States since it was imported from Europe into Massachusetts in 1869 and subsequently escaped. Over the last century, the moth has slowly spread throughout the northeastern United States, and during this time millions of forested acres have been defoliated.

Gypsy moths were first discovered in Illinois in 1973. Since then gypsy moths have been found each year, generally in the northern part of the state.

"The Gypsy Moth: A Threat to Illinois Trees" is a multi-media program designed to acquaint Illinois residents with the gypsy moth. The program includes a description of the life cycle of the gypsy moth, the factors which cause gypsy moth outbreaks to occur, the characteristics that make areas susceptible to gypsy moth attack, and ways that individuals and communities can deal with the gypsy moth.

The program is available in both 26- and 33-minute versions. The longer version stresses the concept of integrated pest management.

Young larvae disperse by spinning silken threads and dropping from the foliage. The long and plentiful hairs on their bodies increase their airborne buoyancy, and they may be carried as much as 20 miles away.

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