

A VIEW FROM THE WOODS

The Gypsy Moth caterpillar is a tree defoliator which has been established in this part of Ontario since 1981. Since that time the populations have risen and fallen but this introduced insect has become a serious forest pest in Leeds County. The Gypsy Moth is here to stay.

In 1986 a cooperative spray program was established between the Counties and the Ministry of Natural Resources to address the needs of the private landowner. The intent of the program is to prevent tree mortality by protecting foliage and to reduce the nuisance factor rather than controlling or eradicating the insect population. This is achieved by using the biological insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), a natural bacteria found in the soil which is not toxic to mammals, birds or fish.

A recent buildup in the population can be attributed to several factors. The summer of 1988 was hot and dry and therefore extremely favourable to the larvae. The following winter was very mild, which resulted in very low egg mass mortality. Upon hatching in the spring, strong winds carried large numbers of the buoyant small caterpillars further eastward. Significant populations may now be found within the Brockville city limits. Due to these factors, moderate to severe defoliation of susceptible species is being witnessed throughout the County. In particular, 100% defoliation has occurred on many trees between Browns Bay Provincial Park and Gananoque. These trees are not dead and should re-foliate. However, repeated defoliations can weaken a deciduous tree making it susceptible to secondary attack by other insects or plant diseases. A single defoliation can kill an evergreen.

In 1989 approximately 1900 hectares (4700 acres) of private land was sprayed in Leeds County with two applications from the Gananoque Airport and the Westport Airstrip. Of this total some 130 hectares (325 acres) was sprayed on Canadian Parks Service (Parks Canada) property. Areas sprayed this year included sections of the 1000 Islands Parkway, some of the St. Lawrence islands, the Charleston Lake area, and the Rideau Canal System. Forestry Canada, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and County staff will be assessing the effectiveness of this year's spray program. There are a number of options for landowners who are experiencing infestations of the gypsy moth. It is too late in the season to effectively spray with Bt. However, it is still possible to spray with carbaryl. This chemical is readily available at any store selling garden supplies. Care should be taken when using any insecticide to follow all label directions closely. Residents can help protect

individual trees and reduce the nuisance level by burlap trapping. This involves tying burlap around the tree at shoulder height and folding it over to form a flap. Caterpillars crawl down the tree during the day and seek shelter under the flap. Daily inspection and destruction of the larvae found can help. Licensed ground and aerial applicators are also available to treat your property.

Others methods of reducing the numbers of gypsy moth include pheromone traps which attract and trap the adult male moth and egg mass scraping and destroying in the fall and winter. The egg masses are about the size of a fifty cent piece, are a buff colour and look like a piece of chamois.

In order to be included in the cooperative spray program for 1990, a number of criteria must first be met. The area must be at least 10 acres in size (or down to 5 acres if an island or easily identifiable block). Landowners with less than 10 acres can combine with neighbours to make up

the required acreage. The area should contain susceptible species (oak, poplar and birch) and should not include open fields or wetlands. The cost is \$5 per acre and applications will be available from the gypsy moth office at the county court house in Brockville (United Counties of Leeds and Grenville). Applications can also be obtained at all township offices or at the Ministry of Natural Resources office on Oxford Avenue. The Landowners are encouraged to organize themselves and submit applications before the summers end. This will allow County staff ample time to verify spray blocks with egg mass surveys.

People who were involved in this year's spray program are invited to submit their comments on the program to Brian Quinn, P.O. Box 729, Brockville, Ontario, K6V 5V8. For more information you can contact Brian Quinn (342-8871) or your local office of the Ministry of Natural Resources (342-8524).



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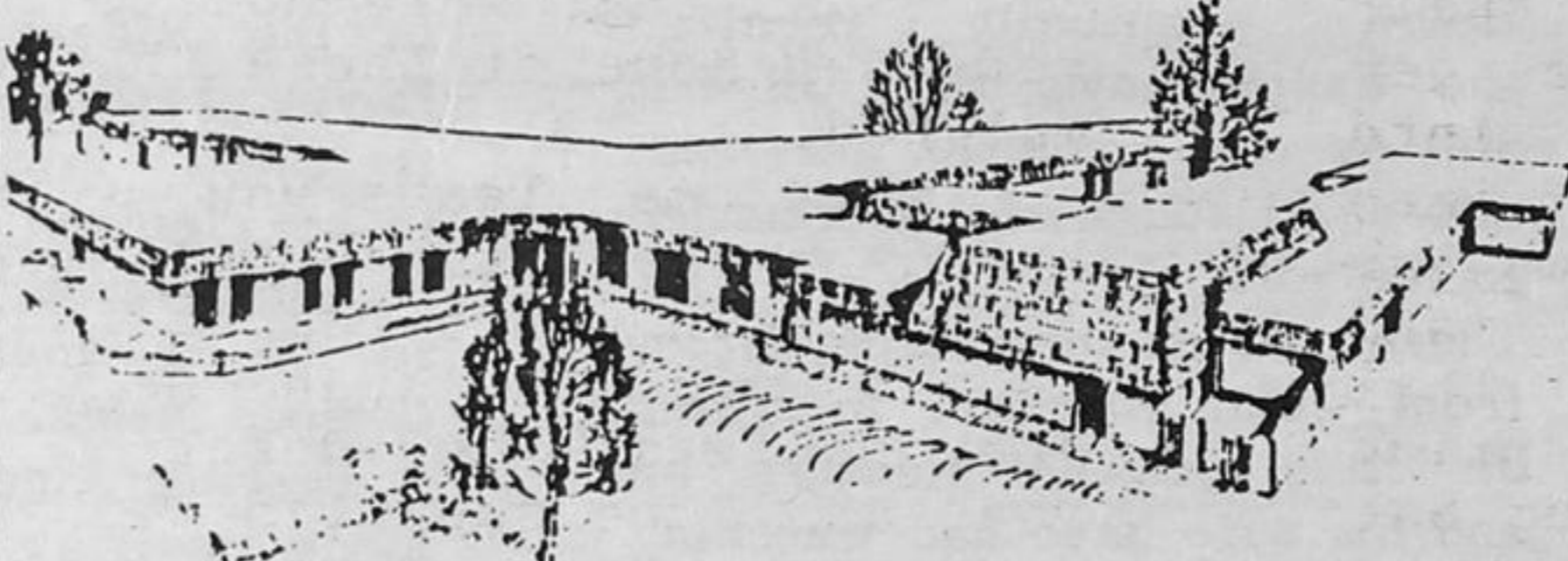
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