



# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GYPSY MOTH PROGRAM

Division of Plant Industry, Plant Pest Control Section  
8995 E. Main St. Reynoldsburg, OH 43068 Phone: (614)-728-6400  
<http://www.agri.ohio.gov/gypsymoth>



---

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY BLOCK RESIDENTS Mating Disruption Treatments

### **Q. What does a gypsy moth look like?**

**A.** When caterpillars hatch, they are about 1/8th inch long and black. As they grow, they become very "hairy", and develop conspicuous blue and red dots on their backs. Full, grown caterpillars are 1 1/2 to 2 inches long. The caterpillars then become pupae (cocoons), which are 1/2 to 1 inch long, brown in color and teardrop shaped. When the moths emerge from the cocoons, the males are brown and fly in a zigzag pattern, while the females are white with dark markings and cannot fly. After mating, the females lay egg masses, which are tan to brown in color, oval and about the size of a quarter in size, and covered with hairs from the female's body.

### **Q. What do the caterpillars like to eat?**

**A.** Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on the leaves of many hardwood trees, especially Oak, hickory, willow, birch, apple, alder, witch hazel, etc. In some instances they feed on conifers as well, including spruce, hemlock, pine and larch. If gypsy moth populations reach high levels in areas where there are large numbers of favored host trees, they can cause extensive tree damage.

### **Q. When will the spray applications take place?**

**A.** Spray applications begin in approximately mid-June. The timing is dependent on caterpillar development, spray block location, and the weather. No definite date or time for spraying any particular block can be determined in advance. Residents can call the Gypsy Moth Hotline for current information on the progress of the spray project.

### **Q. At what time of day will spray applications take place?**

**A.** Treatment applications usually take place from early morning hours to mid-late afternoon, depending on the weather.

### **Q. Do the spray planes fly low?**

**A.** The application planes fly at approximately 100 to 200 feet above treetop level.

### **Q. If a plane flies over my house, does that mean it is spraying?**

**A.** No. The pilot(s) often fly over the area to observe the spray block before any spray is applied. Then the pilot begins making straight runs, but must turn around to spray in the other direction. The spray is turned off when the pilot is negotiating turns.

### **Q. What products are used?**

**A.** ODA has the option of using two different types of mating disruption materials. In both, the active ingredient is the gypsy moth female pheromone. One, Disrupt II, is a tiny laminated plastic flake, with the pheromone in between the layers of plastic. Two, Splat, is a liquid with the consistency of a hand cream that will dry on the leaf surface shortly after application. With both, after application into the tree canopy the pheromone slowly releases during the mating season to disrupt the mating process, thus reducing the population.

**Q. What if I am outside when the planes are spraying?**

**A.** Many people choose to stay indoors when the planes are spraying, but it is not required that you do so. Even if you are outside when the planes fly over, the products used are not harmful to people, animals, birds, or other insects. There have been no documented cases of health problems caused by gypsy moth mating disruption treatments.

**Q. Will the spray harm my pets?**

**A.** No. You may choose to bring your pets inside, but there is no requirement to do so. Horses, however, may be frightened by the low flying planes. It is advisable to keep them stabled when spray applications are expected.

**Q. Will they harm honeybees?**

**A.** No. Neither product has any effect on honeybees or other beneficial insects.

**Q. Do I have to cover my vegetable garden?**

**A.** No. Neither product is toxic when sprayed on home gardens. You may harvest and eat the vegetables after washing them.

**Q. I have a well (or pond) that I use for drinking water. Will the spray applications affect my water supply?**

**A.** No. Studies have shown that both materials will not affect the ground water supply. Open water will not be sprayed.

**Q. Is there any cost to me for the treatment?**

**A.** No. The Slow the Spread Program is sponsored the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the USDA Forest Service.

**For further information please contact:**

Ohio Department of Agriculture  
Gypsy Moth Program  
8995 E. Main St.  
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068  
614-728-6400  
Fax 614-728-6453  
[www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov)