Primary hosts

Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on several hundred species of trees and shrubs. Preferred broad-leaved hosts include oak, apple, alder, aspen, filbert, willow, birch, madrone, cottonwood, and plum. Coniferous species such as Douglas fir, pine, and western hemlock are suitable hosts as well.

Life cycle

The gypsy moth has one generation per year and overwinters in the egg stage. Each female lays 50-1,000 eggs in one mass covered by tan colored hairs. The egg mass is about 3/4 inch wide and 1-1 1/2 inches long and is attached to trees, logs, rocks, buildings, bird houses, and on outdoor household articles.

Caterpillars hatch from eggs in late March in June. When about half-grown the caterpillar acquires 5 pairs of blue bumps and 6 pairs of red bumps on its back. These blue and red bumps distinguish gypsy moth caterpillars from other kinds of hairy caterpillars. The fully grown caterpillar is about 1 1/2 to 2 inches long.
The fully grown caterpillar is about 1 1/2 to 2 inches long. In July the caterpillar transforms into a non-feeding stage called the pupa. The adult moth develops inside the hard, dark-brown pupa. The pupa is attached to solid objects by several strands of silk, often with the last skin shed by the caterpillar attached to its pointed end. Adult moths begin to emerge from pupae in mid-July. The female moth (2 inch wing span) is white with brown zigzag markings on the forewings. The male moth is smaller (1 1/2 wing span) with mottled brown forewings. It can be recognized by two feather-like antennae on its head. Adult moths do not feed. They live for about one week, during which time they mate. Females lay eggs during August and early September starting the life cycle over again.

**Current geographic distribution**

The states most severely infested by the gypsy moth include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

**Impact in Oregon**

High. The ODA sets traps out every year. This year 7 moths were trapped in Shady Cove, Jackson County (2 moths); Eugene, Lane County (2 moths); Portland, Multnomah County (1 moth); Tualatin, Washington County (1 moth); and Wilsonville, Washington County (1 moth).