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Midwest Insect Problems

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We have in the midwest some insects that could blossom out and become real problems.

The caterpillar of the **brown-tail moth** feeds on the foliage of a very wide variety of trees. Plum, pear, apple, maple, willow, etc., just to mention a few. This particular insect is confined mainly to the New England states.

The adult male and female are white except for some brown hairs at the tip of the abdomen. The larva (caterpillar) is kind of a reddish brown and on each side of its body is a broken yellow stripe. The caterpillar overwinters protected in a little webbed area of leaves. When spring arrives it feeds for a short time before forming a pupa. The adult emerges in July and immediately mates depositing its egg masses, which are brown in color, on the undersides of the leaves of trees. And so on year after year.

The most destructive moth of all is called the **gypsy moth**. It is a leaf feeder that attacks most shade and forest trees. The major area of concern is located east of the Hudson River on the east coast. A few years ago, however, Michigan encountered an outbreak of this insect.

Many objects are used by the female moth for depositing her eggs including such things as tree trunks, buildings, etc. The caterpillars grow to a length of about 2½ inches and are very colorful. Five pairs

of blue tubercles followed by six pairs of red ones run along its back.

The gypsy moth overwinters in the egg stage. As the spring of the year blossoms and the leaves unfold, gypsy moth eggs are hatching. The caterpillars feed for about 60 days stripping the foliage off the trees. In late July the adults emerge from their eggs for a long winter's nap and so it continues on and on.

Everyone has heard of the **Japanese beetle**. Population explosions of Japanese beetles means destruction to a great variety of trees, shrubs and other leafy plants.

The year 1916 the United States encountered its first find of this beetle, a native of the Orient. Isolated problems now happen in Illinois occasionally. The adult beetles are easy to recognize. They're metallic green beetles about one-half inch long and have white spots on the tips of their abdomens. They're closely related to the June beetle so if you know what they look like just picture the color change.

Japanese beetles are real strong fliers and enjoy chomping on apples, corn silk, grape foliage, etc. Females drop their eggs in the soil. Grubs hatch out and feed on the roots of grasses. The grubs live under the frostline in the soil during the winter and emerge as adults in June and July. The adults begin feeding on the foliage for about three months. The Japanese beetle life cycle enables it to produce only one generation per year.

If I can be of service to you to help solve your own personal insect problem please feel free to contact me.