

## Gypsy Moth Defoliates 800,000 Acres in Northeast

An estimated 800,000 acres of Northeastern woodlands in eight states were defoliated by gypsy moths this year—more than triple last year's defoliated acreage—the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports.

Connecticut was the hardest hit with 369,000 acres defoliated, according to plant protection officials of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Gypsy moths also defoliated about 240,000 acres in New York; 130,000 in New Jersey; 39,000 in New Hampshire; 11,000 in Pennsylvania; 7,000 in Massachusetts; 1,000 in Rhode Island; and 1,000 in Maine.

Last year gypsy moth defoliation totaled 260,000 acres in these eight States. During 1968 the total was 80,000 acres.

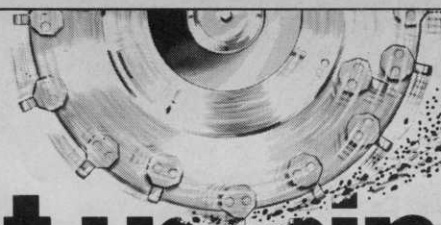
Last year, only 800 acres in Pennsylvania were defoliated. This year, according to Pennsylvania officials, 10,000 acres were defoliated in Monroe County alone. New Jersey defoliation acreage doubled this year.

Population buildups are responsible for rapid spread of the gypsy moth into previously uninfested counties, ARS officials say. The detection of numerous moths this year throughout Delaware and in six Maryland and three Virginia counties may indicate the pest now infests these states. If the moths continue to spread and become established in the commercial forests of the Appalachian and Ozark Mountain ranges, the economic and aesthetic loss could be tremendous, ARS officials said.

Despite biological control efforts with gypsy moth parasites, trials of the sterile-male technique, rigid federal-state quarantines, intensive ARS detection surveys, and cooperative chemical control efforts by ARS and the states involved, the gypsy moth has continued to spread and inflict substantial losses to Northeastern trees.

In their caterpillar form, gypsy moths strip the leaves from forest, shade, and fruit trees, as well as ornamental shrubs. By defoliating forests, they increase fire and erosion hazards, adversely affect stream flow, reduce land and recreational values, and destroy wildlife habitats. ARS plant protection officials point out that a single defoliation has been known to kill white pines, spruce, and hemlock. Two defoliations can kill some hardwoods.

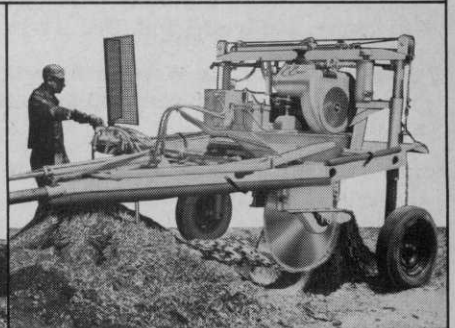
If the gypsy moth spreads throughout the eastern U.S. an estimated 112 million acres could be defoliated.



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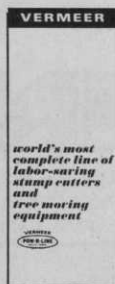
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