Lawn And Turf Pests In Utah

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In 1971 the lawns and turf in parts of Utah County, Utah had many brown spots develop in them that varied from a few inches in diameter to several feet.

Upon examination it was found that the grass roots were cut off just below the surface of the ground by a caterpillar that was less than one inch long. The caterpillars develop into an unattractive gray moth with a wing spread of about one inch.

The moth flies only short distances but stays about one to one and a half feet above the grass, and upon contact with a blade of grass crawls to the base of the plant.

The moth is known by the technical name of crambus probably *bonifatellus*.

Eggs are laid by the moths as it flies and also after it crawls to the base of the plant. The eggs hatch into caterpillars with several generations each season.

In the fall the caterpillars enclose themselves in silken cacoons that are covered with soil. They remain in the cacoon until early spring when the moths emerge and starts a new cycle.

Adults were observed in March 1972 during a period of unusual warm weather for the area. They stopped activity until after a cold period, and thousands of them are now active again.

Damage was prevented by the use of Chlordane emulsifiable concentrate at the rate of 5 tablespoons of the concentrate in one gallon of water and applied with a pump-up sprayer.

However several small spots developed before they were sprayed, and each case the grass grew over the damaged area. In all areas where pesticides were not applied the grass died in ever larger spots.

Biological agents were not observed. In several hundred caterpillars no parasites nor predatory insects were found. No harm was observed to birds, pets and wild life that visited areas that had been sprayed with chlordane.

Michigan Freeway Interchanges Site of Urban Tree Study

Trees along heavily traveled urban freeways take a beating from auto fumes, industrial and household pollutants and mist from salt used in winter maintenance.

Horticulturists at Michigan State University, cooperating with the Department of State Highways, have embarked on a study to find out which species of trees will thrive best along city highways traveled daily by many thousands of vehicles. Their findings will guide highway departments in Michigan and other states in their urban landscaping programs.

More than 1,000 trees of 28 species have been planted in three freeway interchanges near Detroit. Species range from Austrian pine and Norway spruce to horsechestnuts, honeylocusts and crabapples. White pine and other species known to be sensitive to urban pollutants also were planted as "controls."

The long-range goal is to beautify city freeways and other highways with large, healthy trees that will soften the severe lines formed by concrete and steel.

Dr. Harold Davidson, MSU professor of horticulture, will supervise the study. It is financed for the first year by a $20,000 grant from the Michigan Legislature as part of the annual state appropriation to the Agricultural Experiment Station at the University.

"The study is unique in at least two ways," Davidson said. "It is the first time in Michigan, and perhaps in the United States, that a research team has tried to find which trees are most tolerant to adverse conditions found in highway right-of-way in urban areas. He hopes the study will continue for at least three years.

In that period, horticulturists and Tim Chick, district forester for the State Highway Department, will check the trees regularly for growth rates, evidence of tolerance to salt mist and other pollutants, malformations and other signs of damage.