

LANDSCAPE ORNAMENTALS REACTION TO GYPSY MOTH INFESTATION

More preferred

alder
apple
aspen
basswood
river birch
boxelder
hawthorn
larch
mountain ash
oak
sweetgum
willow

Less preferred

arborvitae
ash
catalpa
E. red cedar
fir
grape
holly
honeylocust
horsechestnut
black locust
mulberry
spruce
sycamore
tuliptree

Intermediate

A. hornbeam
A. beech
black gum
buckeye
sweet birch
cherry
chestnut
cottonwood
cucumbertree
dogwood
elm
E. hophornbeam
hickory
magnolia
maple
persimmon
pine
redbud
sassafras
serviceberry
sourwood
walnut

Source: Ohio State University



Gypsy moth skirt trap (left) and milk carton trap will help monitor gypsy moth presence.

Natural enemies of the gypsy moth are parasitic and predatory insects such as wasps, flies, ground beetles and ants. Some spiders and certain birds such as chickadees, bluejays, nuthatches, towhees and robins will eat the moths, as will about 15 species of mammals like white-footed mice, shrews, chipmunks, squirrels and raccoons.

Some pesticides commonly used to control gypsy moths are *Bacillus thuringiensis*, acephate, carbaryl and diflubenzuron. Before using these products, however, check with your county extension agent, state entomologist, state forester or the U.S. Forest Service, Hertel advises.

—Jim Guyette

Positioning with customer service

by Rudd McGary, Ph.D.

■ Al Ries and Jack Trout were the people most responsible for using the concept of "positioning" in their book, "Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind."

The word means to take a place in the consumer's mind by differentiating your company from the rest.

Some examples of famous positions are "The Pepsi Generation" and "At Ford, Quality is Job One."

In the green industry, we must work just as hard to differentiate as do the large national corporations. We must first work to find ways to explain how we are different, and then be able to deliver what we have promised.

Some of the most popular positions in the green industry:

- The technically competent company: "We know how to make your grass grow" or "We have a licensed agronomist (or horticulturist or arborist) on staff."
- Low price: "No one does this for less," or "We'll meet or match any price you get."
- Local ownership: "We are your neighborhood store for green grass" or "Locally owned and operated."

What is 'positioning' and how do you use it to get more customers?

I would not recommend low price positioning; it tends to cut into profits and it's very hard to get rid of. But in some cases, local position works, most often in smaller towns and cities.

There is, however, one position that is a recurrent desire of consumers: customer service. The use of this as a position makes sense—but it isn't simply putting this on your trucks and going out to make your millions.

Certain common factors that consumers say they want that stress customer service:

1) Politeness—Both in person and on the phone, the customer wants to be treated like a human being. If your people who interact with the public are rude to them, you won't have a company very long. Almost no company has ever been accused of treating its customers too politely.

2) Problem resolution—If a customer has a problem and can get it resolved quickly, he or she will perceive the compa-

ny as one which gives good customer service. This takes:

- a staff that can handle unhappy customers on the phone;
- people who are technically capable of responding to problems;
- people who can explain what the problem was to the consumer and what is being done about it; and
- follow-up to make sure the customer is satisfied.

3) Professionalism—Not only in technical matters, but also in the ways you administer the account: how your bills go out, how you collect, how you problem-solve, how you treat customers and how you look (from uniforms to stationery).

You might want to consider using another position in conjunction with customer service. The key is to understand the customer's needs and make sure your organization works on customer service every day.

Do that, and include it in your positioning, and you should prosper.

—The author is senior consultant for Strategic Consulting Group of Worthington, Ohio.