

## WHAT HOMEOWNERS CAN DO TO REDUCE THE GYPSY MOTH POPULATION

Destruction of caterpillars and egg masses by hand can give some relief.

**SCRAPE EGG MASSES.** One way that homeowners can help reduce the gypsy moth population on their property is to hunt for and destroy egg masses each year from September through April. The buff, hair-covered clusters should be carefully scraped off and either burned or dropped in a soap and water or bleach and water solution. Check underside of tree limbs and look in bark crevices. Examine rocks or other objects lying on the ground. Also check firewood, outdoor equipment, outbuildings, house, etc. for gypsy moth egg masses.

**BAND YOUR TREES** with barrier or hiding bands to reduce the number of caterpillars. This is a good way to monitor the growth of the population.

**BARRIER BANDS.** Sticky, or slippery bands can be placed around tree trunks to help curtail the caterpillars movement into and out of the tree canopy. **Sticky bands** can be purchased or made using a nonporous material that can be wrapped around a tree trunk, then coated with a commercially made, vegetable-based sticky material like "tanglefoot". **Never put sticky material directly on tree trunk.** Sticky bands should not be put on the tree until the caterpillars are about an inch long (smaller caterpillars usually stay in the tree canopy). The sticky material on the bands must be reapplied periodically due to weather conditions and bands covered with caterpillars need to be cleaned or replaced. **Slippery bands** are also intended to interrupt the daily migration of the caterpillar from climbing up into the canopy.

**HIDING BANDS.** Cloth, or hiding bands, can be homemade from medium weight dark cloth about 12 to 18 inches wide and long enough to completely wrap around the tree. Fasten each band at about chest height around the tree with twine, cord or wire about midway from the bottom of the cloth. Then fold the top part of the cloth down over the bottom half. Some of the caterpillars descending the tree in the morning hours in search of a secluded daytime resting spot will hide under the flap of the band. Remove and destroy the caterpillars each day by scraping them into a bucket of soapy water.

**ENCOURAGE NATURAL ENEMIES,** parasites, and predators of the gypsy moth. These include several mammals (shrews, mice), birds and predaceous insects. Be cautious of the chemicals used around your home which may affect some of these natural enemies.

**CLEAN UP HIDING PLACES FOR THE GYPSY MOTH.** Dispose of unused equipment stored outside and burn wood stored in wood piles.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR TREES.** Trees that are not stressed will have a better chance of surviving your next gypsy moth infestation.

**OVERCROWDED** trees compete for light, nutrients, and water. Thin an overcrowded woodlot during periods of low gypsy moth infestation.

**LACK OF WATER AND NUTRIENTS** will stress a tree. Fertilize your trees and water during dry periods.

**PLANT TREES THAT THE GYPSY MOTH USUALLY AVOID.** These include ash, pear, locust, juniper, spruce, catalpa, and ginkgo.

Keep an eye on your Gypsy moth population. If their numbers begin to rise, contact the office of the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program through the Macomb MSU Extension Office at 469-6196. Areas are checked in the fall for qualification in the next spring's spray program.