

Subject: Tussock Moth meeting

Date: Mon, 8 Feb 2016 14:51:52 -0700

The overview of the meeting with the Forest Service last week is as follows:

This critter was first noticed in the 1930's. At this time, there are about 24,000 acres affected in the Rampart Range, 200 acres around Boulder and 16,000 acres near Colorado Springs.

They are cyclical and will ultimately take care of themselves thru a virus called Nucleopolyhedrosis (NPV Virus). They build and collapse on their own if that virus is viable within the affected area. ***If you spray, IT MAY KILL THE VIRUS AS WELL AS SOME OF THE CATAPILLERS.***

***THAT DOES NOT MEAN YOU SHOULD NOT SPRAY, IT SIMPLY MEANS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT YOU MAY KILL WHAT WOULD KILL THE EGG SACKS AS WELL.***

If you intend to spray, be very careful of what you use. Many insecticides also kill birds, all butterflies and most importantly, bees. Be label conscious. If you intend to spray, you need to do it early May to early June, but it is still a very narrow window of time when it will do any good. If you have questions you can call the Forest Department and they will assist you.

The main problem with spraying is that there is a very narrow window in which it will do any good. Only when the larva first appear, just after hatching from the egg sacks, and they remain for only a few days when they are vulnerable to spraying. However, not all eggs hatch at the same time. They hatch over about a month, so if you spray early to catch the early hatch, you will miss the later hatch. If the spray has a carrier in it (like oil or soap) that will hold it to the trees for a certain length of time, but will wash off with rain or heavy dew and disintegrate after a few weeks.

The females are wingless and do not fly. (obviously) They lay eggs until the end of the summer. So trying to catch the hatch time is extremely difficult. Eggs hatch shortly after the bud break on the trees. They can be wind blown at this point in their life cycle. Normally, wherever they are in June, they will be there for the rest of the year. They normally disperse within a 1/2 mile area of the affected trees, however, not always. They can travel much further under certain conditions.

If you find the caterpillars on your trees, be careful of pulling them off. They have little hairs that can be toxic to you and cause breathing irritation and rashes on your hands and arms.

Watch for the egg sacks on the sides of buildings, under your eaves, picnic tables, especially campers and other movable things you take to other parts of the State as they can spread by hatching wherever you happen to park.

Walk your property and look for egg sacks at the end of summer and early fall and that may tell you if you are going to have an infestation the following year. But again, spraying is only affective if you hit it at the right time.

Another thing you need to be aware of, in this area, along the river, we have the Pawnee Montane Skipper which is a protected species that any spray will kill. Sprays drift, no matter how careful the person doing the application is.

**THE BIGGEST THING I GOT FROM THIS MEETING WAS DON'T PANIC AND GO CUT**

**DOWN YOUR TREES THAT MAY LOOK AS THOUGH THEY ARE DEAD OR ARE PARTIALLY DEFOLIATED. THEY HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF COMING BACK. GIVE THEM AT LEAST 2 YEARS TO RECOVER BEFORE YOU GIVE UP ON THEM.**

That statement gave me hope that perhaps my trees are not as bad as I thought they were. We even asked the pros if they thought that the trees up Foxton Road could come back. The answer was yes, there is a good possibility that they will.

So, I have brochures here for each of you. I plan on a HOA meeting in March so will have them with me then. If you want one before that, let me know and I will get it to you or you can come by my house. Lot 42.