



Gypsy Moth Invasion Ruining N.J. Forests

Gypsy Moth Invasion Destroying Thousands of Acres of New Jersey Forests

TABERNACLE, N.J. Jun 10, 2006 (AP)— An invasion of gypsy moths has been destroying thousands of acres of New Jersey forests in the span of a month, setting the state up for its worst outbreak since the caterpillars defoliated 140,000 acres in 2001.



And that's disrupting life for numerous Garden State residents, such as Bruce Long, who can't get the concrete patio around his pool clean. A power washer can't even get rid of the feces stains left by the gypsy moth caterpillars that invaded his yard, and the thousands of caterpillars he's killed cover his land.

"It's like something out of a horror movie," the 55-year-old sales manager told Gannett New Jersey for Saturday's editions. "It's the grossest thing I've seen in my life."

Joe Zoltowski, who heads the state Department of Agriculture gypsy moth control program, said the outbreak seems to have spread from state-owned lands. Areas like Wharton State Forest don't have strong gypsy moth spray programs, he said, and dry conditions have prevented the growth of a soil fungus that helps control the creatures.

Even school officials are worried about the caterpillar invasion, trying to keep students healthy gypsy moths can cause allergic reactions if they touch skin and away from the fecal droppings.

Dave Rhine, superintendent of Green Bank Elementary in Burlington County, changed plans for events like Field Day. "With (gypsy moth) droppings all over, we had to move the kids inside," Rhine told the Press of Atlantic City for Saturday's editions. "I like my hot dogs with mustard and relish, nothing else (on my food)." Help may be on the way soon, though. On Friday, Gov. Jon S. Corzine authorized the use of \$750,000 in federal funds for New Jersey's gypsy moth suppression program

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