

Aerial spraying efforts were concluded this week by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to address the largest infestation of gypsy moth caterpillars in recent years. Aerial spraying occurred in seven municipalities throughout New Jersey.

The Department expects more than 200,000 acres to be defoliated by gypsy moth caterpillars this year. That is an increase from 125,000 last year. Many areas are seeing their third straight year of heavy defoliation. Oak trees, the caterpillars' primary target, can die after three successive years of defoliation, while conifers can die after just one year.

The Department thanks the municipalities involved in this year's program for their cooperation and support.

In the past week, the following municipalities were sprayed using both helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft:

- ✓ **Burlington County** – Pemberton Township
- ✓ **Mercer County** – Princeton Township
- ✓ **Middlesex County** – East Brunswick Township and Spotswood Borough
- ✓ **Somerset County** – Hillsborough Township
- ✓ **Sussex County** – Hampton and Sandyston Townships

All municipalities scheduled for applications of B.t.k. this year have been sprayed. This concludes the aerial spraying by the Department for this year.

The Department employed Integrated Pest Management techniques in its gypsy moth suppression efforts, targeting 62,500 acres for aerial spraying of the insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis var kurstaki*, or B.T.K., the least toxic spray material for this purpose. In addition, the Department encourages the activity of fungus disease and other natural predators of the caterpillar. Over the past several years, natural conditions that have not been conducive to the predators have resulted in the need for increased spraying to try to control the gypsy moth population.

This year, the Department will receive nearly \$1.5 million in federal funds for a 50-percent reimbursement to municipalities that participate in the voluntary aerial spraying suppression efforts. A chart listing this year's spray zones, and the gypsy moth contact for each municipality, can be found at [www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gmwebtable.html](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gmwebtable.html). Additional information about gypsy moths can be found at [www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gypsymoth.html](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gypsymoth.html).