



News Release

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GFC SETS TRAPS FOR DESTRUCTIVE FOREST PESTS

Residents in 23 Georgia counties may soon notice the Georgia Forestry Commission erecting special insect traps in their neighborhood. The traps, which are mounted on trees and look like small paperboard tents, are designed to detect the tiny gypsy moth, which has destroyed thousands of acres of trees throughout the Northeastern United States.

“Gypsy moths will feed on any kind of tree species, but especially like oaks,” said Scott Griffin, Forest Health Specialist with the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC). “Through the end of May, GFC Professionals will be putting up 4,600 traps statewide. We’ll be targeting fast-growing counties and likely introduction sites, such as state parks, where visitors might inadvertently bring in the gypsy moth.”

The gypsy moth is a serious forest pest capable of causing severe damage to trees. There are currently no known gypsy moth infestations in Georgia; however, White, Fannin and Rockdale counties have recorded infestations in the past. Gypsy moths were caught in Glynn, Chatham and Morgan counties last year, so more intensive trapping is planned for these three counties to determine whether an infestation is beginning. The traps being erected by the GFC contain pheromone lures, which mimic what the female gypsy moth releases, and in turn lure male moths and catch them in a sticky trap. Gypsy moth larvae are the insect’s destructive life stage, which hatch and feed on trees’ young leaf sprouts in the spring.

“Gypsy moths can defoliate thousands of acres of trees in short order,” explained Griffin. “If we find evidence of even one moth, we start high intensity trapping where it was caught. We’re working hard to ensure this destructive pest does not invade Georgia’s 24.8 million acres of forest land.”

The 23 counties in which gypsy moth traps will be placed are: Brantley, Chatham, Clarke, Columbia, Dade, Effingham, Elbert, Floyd, Glynn, Houston, Laurens, Liberty, Macon, Monroe, Morgan, Putnam, Seminole, Talbot, Troup, Union, Wayne, White and Whitfield.

For more information about the gypsy moth or other forest pests, forest health, and the many services offered by the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit GaTrees.org.

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