

## Public information meeting on Asian gypsy moth eradication project scheduled for St. Helens

**February 20, 2007...**The Oregon Department of Agriculture has scheduled a public information meeting to discuss its proposed Asian gypsy moth eradication project for this spring in St. Helens. ODA representatives and health officials will be on hand to answer questions and concerns from the public.

The meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Thursday March 1, at St. Helens High School, 2375 Gable Road in St. Helens.

ODA is proposing a 640-acre eradication area that includes residential properties. Last summer, an Asian gypsy moth was detected in a trap located in the area. Unlike the more common European gypsy moth, female Asian gypsy moths are strong fliers and are attracted to lights, allowing populations to spread much more rapidly. In addition, the Asian gypsy moth feeds on a broader range of host trees, including conifers. These factors and others make the Asian gypsy moth a significant exotic threat to Oregon.

ODA is proposing three aerial applications of the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (B.t.k.), which has been used routinely in other gypsy moth eradication projects throughout the West, including Oregon, since 1984.

A final decision on the eradication proposal will be made by the director of ODA. If approved, the spray project would be scheduled to take place in late April through May. A draft project Environmental Assessment has been prepared to assess possible environmental impacts of the proposed eradication program. Copies of the draft are available on the ODA Web site at <[http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/IPPM/gm\\_ea07.shtml](http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/IPPM/gm_ea07.shtml)> and from the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Plant Division Office in Salem. Interested persons may also phone 1-800-525-0137 to request a copy. The comment period on the draft Environmental Assessment will end at the close of business March 19, 2007.

Early detection and eradication of gypsy moth infestations are goals of ODA to prevent economic and environmental losses to Oregon by restrictive quarantines on commodities, by loss of foliage and even trees, or loss of favorable fish habitat due to expanding gypsy moth populations.

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**ews from agriculture**

Oregon Department of Agriculture