



## OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### LIGHT BROWN APPLE MOTH THREATENS OREGON

SALEM, Oregon—The light brown apple moth certainly doesn't sound menacing. One pictures a tan moth poised handsomely on a beautiful ripe Oregon apple. Unfortunately, the light brown apple moth, called LBAM by entomologists tracking its trail of devastation as it spreads from California, threatens Oregon's agricultural industry.

"This is yet another example of a pest Oregon cannot afford to have in the state," said Helmuth Rogg, Oregon Department of Agriculture Integrated Pest Program Manager. "The light brown apple moth is a threat to Oregon's nursery and agricultural industry."

Light brown apple moths (LBAM) are native to Australia. They are small brown to brownish orange moths—although adults are highly variable in color—less than 13 mm (0.51 inches) long when resting with wings folded.

Despite its name, the LBAM fancies far more than apples. The small moth destroys, stunts, or deforms seedlings, damages fruit tree crops, and damages ornamental plants that lessens their value. LBAM feeds on over 1,000 plants, but primarily on pome and stone fruits (apple, pear, sweet cherry, apricot, nectarine, peach, plum, and hawthorne). However, LBAM can survive by feeding on a wide range of host plants, including blackberry (and other cane berries), broccoli, butterfly bush, cabbage, camellia, cauliflower, clover, alfalfa, peas, beans, cottonwood, English walnut, grape, hops, ivy, mint, mustard, oak, pine, potato, rose, scotch broom, and willow.

It has been reported as an economic pest of apples and grapes in New Zealand and Australia, and is of particular concern because of its broad host range and ability to survive in a wide variety of climates. Several countries, including Chile, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, and Thailand, list LBAM as a quarantine pest, and Canada has regulations in place. First detected in California in 2006, LBAM has become established in the British Isles, Hawaii, New Caledonia, and New Zealand and has recently been detected in Marin, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Napa, Santa Cruz, Monterey, Santa Clara, Solano, and Los Angeles counties in California.

California implemented quarantine measures and aerial spraying of proprietary synthetic

pheromones over urban and suburban areas after LBAM was discovered. They also treated potential infestations in plants with pesticides, smothering oils, and biologic controls such as *Bacillus thuringiensis*, the same agent used to manage gypsy moths in Oregon. A small but organized public opposition to aerial spraying resulted in California abandoning plans for aerial spraying in population centers. The state now uses pheromone-impregnated twist-ties similar to New Zealand, and is working on a sterile insect technique (SIT) releasing thousands of sterile moths.

What can people do to contribute to early detection of LBAM in Oregon? Unlike many invaders that are relatively easy to identify, LBAM adults, larvae, and other life stages are similar to other leafroller moths. As a result, identification can only be performed by a trained entomologist. That's why it's so important for Oregon to have a robust Integrated Pest Management Program.

A key role for our program is to set traps in Oregon to detect new invaders like LBAM," said Rogg. "If we can find these species early, we have a better chance of eradication. In addition, if we catch an infestation when it is small, we can use fewer chemicals over a smaller geographic area."

Although the average person may not be able to identify LBAM, everyone can play a role in preventing its introduction into Oregon by not bringing in fruits, vegetables, plants, seeds, soil or other such items from foreign countries.

Oregon is keeping its fingers crossed, hoping that California's efforts to eradicate LBAM are successful.

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*The Oregon Invasive Species Council was established by the Oregon Legislature in 2002. Its mission is to conduct a coordinated and comprehensive effort to keep invasive species out of Oregon and to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the impacts of invasive species already established in Oregon. Current members of the council hail from the Oregon Marine Board, USDA Forest Service, USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, The Nature Conservancy, Dow Agrosciences, DLF International, Wallowa Resources, Port of Portland, and SOLV. In addition, agency representatives include Portland State University, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Sea Grant, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.*