

The presentation today given by a UCONN professor Tom Worthley at the Danielson Veterans Coffeehouse, about gypsy caterpillars was excellent and we want to share it.

Last year's infestation was disgusting, repulsive and just plain creepy so here is what we learned today.

To kill or at least control them to some extent:

1. Starting now, check your trees, decking, fences and basically anyplace you see they have laid eggs. Each little egg cocoon contains about 500 to 1000 eggs. Spray them using a can of canola oil spray and it will suffocate and kill the eggs or the Caterpillars themselves whenever you see them.

2. You can wrap your trees...primarily the ornamental trees, evergreens (which will die if they get infested as they do not have the resources to replenish themselves) and oak trees which are their favorite. You can use gorilla tape, masking tape, pretty much any stick tape. Try to make sure that there is not any room for the caterpillar to get under the tape because the first time they climb the trees, they are very small. You can also buy some Tanglefoot Insect Barrier and put it on the tape to make sure you really kill them. You will need to repeat this as the stickiness on the tape wears off. I'm also thinking why not put 2 tapes about a foot apart? If one is good then surely two should be better. A recommended tape is Tanglewood Guard Tree Wrap. Available on Amazon but you might be able to get it elsewhere.

3. Using a garden sprayer, add soap like Ivory flakes to the water. Get it good and soapy and spray the damn things. This will also suffocate them.

4. Pray for a lot of rain because that helps grow the fungus that kills the caterpillars on contact. You might remember that happening late fall last year.

Sadly, the caterpillars will not go away. Some year's conditions are simply better for them than others. So I am going to the store and stock up on canola oil spray, Ivory Snow flakes, tape and Tree Tanglefoot Insect Barrier.

Let's give them a run for their money or maybe our money.

One last interesting fact...the female caterpillars once turned into moths do not fly. They just sit there and wait for any male moth to come along. Apparently they are not choosy and ANY male will do. They then lay the eggs. What a life...

Don't fret when after doing all of this you still these nasty things right thru July.

You may kill several thousand but there may be hundreds of thousands still in the trees. We just do what we can.