



Why planes are used

Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on tree leaves. The most efficient and effective way to apply products to the tree canopy is by airplane. Aerial application uses less than a gallon of pesticide per acre, puts it in the tree canopy where the insects feed, and is far less expensive per acre than ground-based pesticide application.

The pilots

Professional pilots who fly the pesticide spray planes are licensed and certified by the Federal Aviation Administration. They are also licensed and certified by the State of Wisconsin as commercial pesticide applicators. Wisconsin also accepts applicator licensing and certification from qualified states.

The companies

Businesses that provide aerial application of pesticides are also licensed by the State of Wisconsin. The companies that were awarded the spray contracts for the Gypsy Moth Program meet all of Wisconsin's strict requirements as pesticide applicators and as application businesses.

The planes

- Spray planes require special flight training
- The planes carry global positioning systems (GPS) for computer-controlled spraying precision
- While the spray planes are flying, they are monitored by observers in planes flown by pilots with the Wisconsin DNR

Security measures

In recent years, public concern has increased about the possible use of spray planes as instruments of terrorism. The pilots and the Wisconsin Cooperative Gypsy Moth Program are aware of this concern and take extra precautions during gypsy moth treatments including:

- An established chain of custody from the product manufacturers to Wisconsin for all of the biological pesticides
- Securing pesticides according to the current pesticide law
- Identification requirements and restricted access to planes
- On-site security
- Notification of local law enforcement, local officials and local media
- Planes are secured or disabled when not in use