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# Wisconsin Forestry Notes

May 2011

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

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*DNR celebrates 1.5 billion seedlings and 100 years of helping reforest Wisconsin!*

## 100 Years of Tree Seedling Production

The state tree nurseries are celebrating 100 years of seedling production in 2011 and designated May as “Nursery Centennial Month.” The first seeds were planted during the spring of 1911 and grew into the red and white pine seedlings distributed to state and county properties in 1913 for reforestation projects in the cut-over area of the Northwoods. Over the past 100 years the Wisconsin state nursery system has produced more than 1.5 billion tree seedlings planted in Wisconsin. The mission of the nursery program is to insure a consistent supply of high quality seedlings of desirable forest species for an economical price, from public and private sources, to encourage reforestation in Wisconsin. The nursery system has adapted through the years, experiencing high demand for seedlings during the peak of the federal Conservation Reserve Program and the 1950s Soil Bank era and decreased sales during the Great Depression and the recent economic downturn. The program is now updating their business plan as it begins its second century of serving Wisconsin forest landowners. Read more about the program history and the centennial celebration at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Nursery/GeneralInfo/history.htm>

*A mild spring allowed us to lend a hand to Texas firefighters.*

## Spring fire season: calm here, turbulent in Texas

As of mid-May, the Wisconsin DNR had suppressed 271 fires on 287 acres in DNR protection areas. Widespread precipitation is expected to hasten green up conditions across the state. The mild spring fire season in Wisconsin allowed WDNR to assist the Texas Forest Service with personnel and equipment. Since January, Texas has battled more than 10,000 wildfires burning 2.3 million acres. Wisconsin is reimbursed for our out-of-state firefighting assistance costs and it gives our personnel valuable training and experience as well. For more information, contact Director of the Bureau of Forest Protection Trenten Marty, 608-266-7978.

*Wasps may hold hope for control of the invasive emerald ash borer.*

## Wasps to be tested for EAB control

A DNR grant will help fund a three-year research study to determine whether a tiny, stingless wasp might be able to play a role in control of the emerald ash borer (EAB). This spring, scientists with UW-Madison, DNR and the USDA-APHIS will introduce three species of stingless parasitic wasps that prey almost exclusively on the ash-killing EAB. Two wasp species that parasitize the larval stage of EAB are being released in May while the third species, scheduled for release later this summer, parasitizes the EAB by depositing its egg inside the EAB egg. These tiny, stingless wasps do not pose a threat to people and do not seek shelter in buildings. The wasps stay close to EAB-infested ash trees and most people will never see them at work in the tree canopies. For more information, contact Forest Health Coordinator Jane Cummings Carlson, 608-275-3273 (Jane is retiring at the end of June so this contact info is only valid until then).

*If you hear or see a loud, low-flying plane, it may be part of the gypsy moth control efforts.*

## Gypsy moth control underway in May

Spraying for gypsy moth is underway after a cool, wet spring. DNR's suppression program serves eastern Wisconsin, where counties are quarantined for gypsy moth and the pest is well-established. In a voluntary program that works by responding to landowners and local governments, portions of Dane, Brown, Marinette, Menominee, Milwaukee, Rock, Sauk and Shawano counties are being aerially sprayed in 2011 to prevent damage from very high populations and to reduce populations to more sustainable levels. Treatments are done with two naturally-occurring pesticides that are not harmful to humans, pets or other animals. DATCP focuses another gypsy moth program called "Slow the Spread" in western Wisconsin, where gypsy moth populations are low and emerging, to slow the westward spread of the pest. The DATCP 2011 spray program includes 23 counties and portions of three state properties. For current spray locations, listen to a recorded message at 1-800-642-6684, sign up for e-mail updates or review spray block maps at <http://gypsymoth.wi.gov> or e-mail questions to [dnrgypsymoth@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnr-gypsymoth@wisconsin.gov).

*You may see more forest tent and eastern tent caterpillars in Wisconsin woods this spring.*

## Native caterpillar populations higher this year

Populations of two leaf-eating, native caterpillars appear to be on the rise in some parts of the state. Forest tent caterpillar populations rose last year after nearly 10 years of low populations. Forest tent caterpillars can be identified by their blue sides and light colored "keyhole" or "footprint" shapes down their back. Populations of eastern tent caterpillar (identified by a distinctive white stripe down the back) have been high in southern and central Wisconsin for several years. This caterpillar does make a tent, unlike the gypsy moth or forest tent caterpillars. In high numbers, eastern tent caterpillar and forest tent can strip the leaves off of infested trees. But this defoliation occurs early in the season and trees have time to grow a new set of leaves and produce the energy they need. Production of a second set of leaves does stress trees and cumulative stress from defoliation, injury, drought, and more can be fatal. See this news release or visit this Webpage for hints on controlling these native caterpillars.

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