



GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION IN MIDLAND COUNTY

Where are we now?

Out of sight, out of mind. For many Midland County residents, this familiar mantra works for the gypsy moth – that pesky caterpillar that hangs from branches, gumming up decks, staining cars, and defoliating trees. But that’s because the Midland County Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is working.

The Midland County Gypsy Moth Suppression Program began in 1986 with a very visible treatment in response to a massive defoliation in which nearly one-third of the county's forest cover was eaten by the pests. Today, the countywide program operates more in the background, rotating off-season egg mass surveys with spraying to keep gypsy moth populations in check.

An invasive species native to Europe, the gypsy moth has no natural predators in Michigan. This means that when populations begin to grow, they grow unchecked, quickly becoming an overwhelming problem. By maintaining an annual program of regular surveillance and treatment, Midland County has been staying ahead of the problem.

The gypsy moth population is on the upswing

Gypsy moth populations appear to be growing across the county according to Neal Swanson, the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program manager at Aquatic Consulting Services. Specifically, the program is monitoring rapidly rising populations in Homer, Lee, and Mt Haley Townships. Greendale and Geneva Townships are also showing notable population growth, which has not been seen in several years. The staff is also battling robust populations in three areas of the City of Midland.

How gypsy moth suppression is funded

Today the program is contracted to [Aquatic Consulting Services](#) and funded through a popular millage approved by Midland County voters. The Gypsy Moth Fund reserves money for the sole purpose of gypsy moth suppression, and it is replenished only as needed. Many years, no millage is levied due to low operating costs. If the fund does become depleted though, a portion of the millage may be levied to keep the program going. In recent years, only one-third to one-half of the millage has been needed to keep the populations from getting out of control.

Plans for 2020

The goal for 2020 remains much the same as it has since the program began, to provide Midland City and County residents relief from the nuisance and damage high numbers of gypsy moth caterpillars can produce.



Swanson says, “We try to stay ahead of the game. Our biggest challenge is trying to predict when and where outbreaks might occur. Monitoring populations year round enables us to intervene with treatment **before** an outbreak occurs. Once an outbreak begins, it can take a few seasons of spraying to get the population down to tolerable levels again.”

The spray map for 2020 can be viewed at the West Midland Community Center and on the Aquatic Consulting Services website at www.aquaticremedies.com/current-season-spray-map. Read [more](#) about Midland County’s program.



2020 Gypsy Moth Treatment Program

Acreage	4,758 acres in the city and county
Treatment	Targeted aerial spraying of trees where caterpillars actively feed, using <i>Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki</i> (B.t.k.) occurs in late May or early June, depending on weather. Once the caterpillars ingest the B.t., they will die within a few days.
Cost	Approximately \$158,000 (funding from the Midland County Gypsy Moth Suppression Fund)
Contractor	Aquatic Consulting Services, Sanford MI gypsymoth@aquaticremedies.com , 989-689-0223