



Mount Vernon

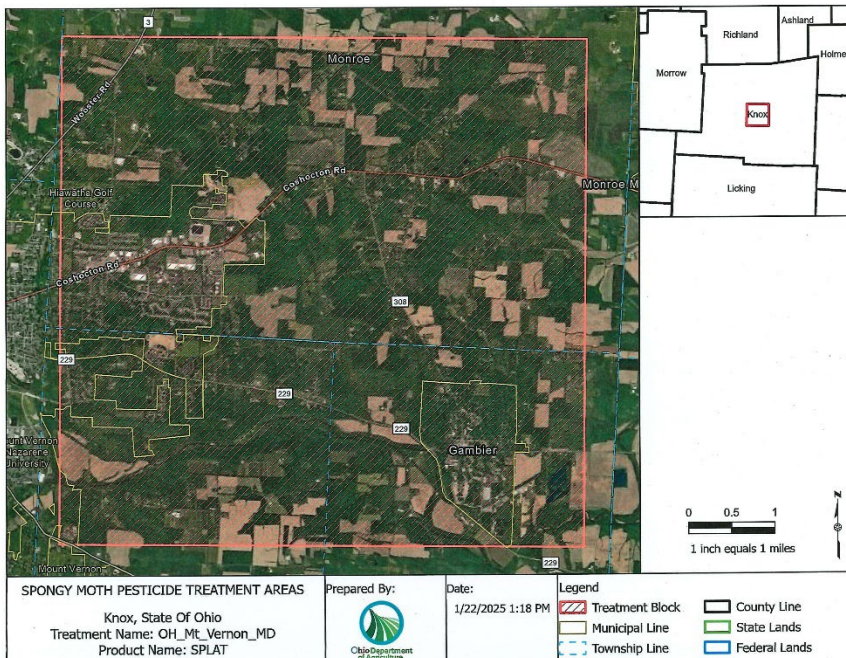
An Innovative Community; Authentically Hometown

State to Spray for Spongy Moths in City This Spring

Aerial treatments against invasive insect not harmful to people, environment

MOUNT VERNON, January 31, 2025 – The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) will spray to control the invasive spongy moth in portions of the City of Mount Vernon and surrounding areas this spring.

Spongy moth caterpillars feed on leaves, weakening trees and shrubs and potentially killing them. The ODA has determined there is a growing population in this area and that a control treatment is needed. The agency says treatments, which are made aerially, are not harmful to humans, animals, honeybees or plants.



The area to be treated includes the eastern portion of Mount Vernon, the village of Gambier and much of Monroe and Pleasant Townships, east to Monroe Mills Road.

Before this spring's aerial treatments, the dates of which have not yet been announced, the ODA will hold a pair of virtual open houses to explain the various treatments to the public, on **Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 12 p.m.** and **Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 6 p.m.** Links to the virtual open houses will be available soon on the homepage of agri.ohio.gov.

Anyone unable to attend one of the open houses can still



Spongy moth larva (Lymantria dispar).
Credit: Entomological Society of America

make a public comment by emailing plantpest@agri.ohio.gov. The public comment period is open until February 29, 2025.

The ODA will use airplanes or helicopters flying 100 to 200 feet above the treetops to spray the insecticide SPLAT GM-O, a non-toxic, biodegradable formulation that controls spongy moths using pheromones, which control the insects by eliminating their ability to mate. The ODA advises that if the insecticide is found on vehicles or other surfaces it can be washed off with soap and water.

The spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*), which has been an invasive insect in the U.S. for centuries, was known as the gypsy moth until 2022, when the Entomological Society of America changed the name of the insect due to the word "gypsy" being used as a derogatory term for the Romani people.

The insect was introduced into this country by the Frenchman Etienne Trouvelot in Medford, Mass., in the mid-1860s. Trouvelot, who fashioned himself an amateur entomologist, thought the spongy moth could be used for silk production, but the larvae kept by Trouvelet soon escaped into the neighboring woods. Trouvelot then lost interest in entomology and moved back to his native France, where he later died.

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ABOUT THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON:

The City of Mount Vernon is an innovative community with an authentic hometown feel. The City is dedicated to providing modern services with an emphasis on continual improvement, customer service and equitable laws that support our citizens and visitors, while retaining and attracting investors in our community. Home to 17,000 people, Mount Vernon is the county seat for Knox County and boasts historic buildings and districts as well as business and professional, educational and recreational opportunities through many adaptive reuses of the community's infrastructure and spaces. The City has strong ties to higher education, with Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College and Central Ohio Technical College operating satellite locations in the historic downtown. Located 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Mount Vernon is near the geographic center of Ohio and has connections all over the globe.

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