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# PEST REPORT

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## RUSTY TUSOCK MOTH OUTBREAK IN THE MONTE HILLS - DOUGLAS PLATEAU AREA

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Infestations of rusty tussock moth, *Orgyia antiqua badia*, were recently found in lodgepole pine stands in the Monte Hills - Douglas Plateau area near Dardanelles Lake and Todd Lake (T.F.L. 16). Examination of these areas with B. C. Forest Service and Crown Zellerbach Ltd. personnel revealed numerous overwintering egg masses in the upper crowns of 80-100 year old lodgepole pine trees; fewer, but significant numbers, were also found on Engelmann spruce, and understory alpine fir and mountain alder.

The infestation appears to be restricted to lodgepole pine stands between 3,600 and 5,000 feet elevation, and is estimated to cover 6,000 to 8,000 acres, of which approximately 1,000 acres sustained light to moderate defoliation in 1975. The occurrence of this insect has also been reported in the areas of Whiteman Creek, and west of Bouleau Lake.

Unlike its relative, the Douglas-fir tussock moth, which has recently caused considerable tree mortality in the Kamloops area, the rusty tussock moth does not have a history of causing extensive, severe defoliation in British Columbia. Past outbreaks have been few, small, and lasting only one or two years before a virus controlled the epidemic.

The present egg population in the Dardanelles - Todd lakes area suggests a potential for severe defoliation, but not enough historical data are available to confidently predict future trends.

High elevation pine stands south of Kamloops will get close scrutiny about mid-June when the eggs have all hatched and larval feeding begins to discolor the foliage.