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Pacific Forest Research Centre
506 West Burnside Road
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March 1985

PEST REPORT

A CYPRESS TIP MOTH EAST VANCOUVER ISLAND AND LOWER MAINLAND

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A cypress tip moth, Argyresthia sp. has been collected in Victoria since 1955 and commonly distributed in southwestern B.C.; it has occasionally increased to infestation proportions. The tip moth is of little significance in forests, but is of considerable concern in urban areas.

The current outbreak, which commenced about 1975, intensified from 1982-84 to cause foliar browning, branch, and occasional tree or shrub mortality of ornamental cypress trees and shrubs such as Italian, Lawson, Leyland and Monterey cypresses, oriental cedar and some species of juniper. Areas where foliar browning occurred in 1984 included Greater Victoria, Saanich Peninsula, Duncan, Nanaimo, Courtenay-Comox, Campbell River and urban areas of the Lower Mainland.

In March 1985, four positive samples, collected from the Greater Victoria and Central Saanich areas, confirmed the continued active presence of cypress tip moth larvae in these areas. The larvae are at an early instar stage and little current damage has yet occurred. Damage can be expected to increase progressively until larval maturity.

After passing the winter in relative inactivity, tip moth larvae commence feeding in early spring, although cold weather conditions may retard early activity for some days or weeks. Each larva is capable of attacking four to six twigs causing tips to die beyond the point of attack. Trees and shrubs damaged in 1984 or which are in the immediate vicinity of other damaged trees are likely hosts and may warrant control measures.

Infestations can be reduced and damage minimized with a recommended insecticide preferably systemic, such as Orthene or Cygon. On a calm, dry, sunny late March-early April day, trees and shrubs should be thoroughly sprayed (following label instructions). A repeat application approximately two weeks later and at egg hatch in July is recommended. Caution is necessary when using insecticides as most junipers are quite sensitive to sprays.