

County at center of moth infestation



Jon Chown/Register-Pajaronian

Dave Cavanaugh, owner of Cavanaugh Color nursery on Webb Road, looks for signs of leafrolling pests, like the light brown apple moth, on his property on Tuesday. BELOW: Light brown apple moths are leafrollers and damage plants in a way similar to the damage done to this plant by another leafrolling pest.

Light Brown Apple Moth
Moths could cause \$133 million worth of damage to local crops

RP 7 25 07

By JON CHOWN

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Santa Cruz County continues to be the epicenter for the light brown apple moth infestation, with almost 90 percent of all moths found in California, found here. To date, 5,943 moths have been found in the state and 5,075 were in Santa Cruz County, according to Larry Hawkins, spokesman for the United States Department of Agriculture.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture and the USDA have set up a LBAM headquarters on the west edge of the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds to monitor and trap the moth. The light brown apple moth is a leaf-rolling pest that caused millions of dollars of damage to plants in Australia and New Zealand before it was first spotted in California in March. Left uncontrolled, the CDFA estimates the moths could cause \$133 million in damage.

"There is no question that Santa Cruz County is where the big daddy is in terms of the infested area," said Hawkins.

Hawkins said the USDA has begun eradication of the moth where a few isolated populations have been found, such as in Napa, where *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt, was used to kill them. Hawk-



ins said the strategy is to focus on the perimeter of the problem first, containing the problem before focusing on the center of it.

That means it may be awhile before

eradication efforts begin full force in Watsonville and Hawkins noted that the LBAM headquarters at the fairgrounds

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