

PLANT PROTECTION SECTION

This Section is responsible for administering programs relating to nursery inspection, plant protection and quarantine programs, integrated pest management, nuisance bird control, forest pest management, certified plant production, inspection and registration of honey bee colonies, and administration of the Interstate Pest Control Compact.

The Chief of this Section provides general supervision to the programs and currently serves as the State Plant Pathologist. Personnel in this Section serve as the State's authority on plant pests and agricultural quarantines and provide liaison for the Department with other state and federal regulatory officials (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 5-301 through 5-313; 5-501 through 5-507; and 1976 supplement secs. 5-701 through 5-716, and 1977 supplement secs. 5-801 through 5-805).

GYPSY MOTH CONTROL SECTION

The gypsy moth is the most destructive forest pest of the eastern United States. In addition, it causes serious problems in wooded residential areas, parks, and recreation areas, and is the subject of a national and international quarantine program. This pest has been present in Maryland since 1971, but as a result of effective control measures there has been no damage to date in the State. A cooperative local, State, and federal program to manage the gypsy moth is coordinated out of the Annapolis Office.

PESTICIDE APPLICATORS LAW SECTION

This Section is responsible for regulating the use of pesticides in the State. The program provides for the licensing of businesses engaged in the commercial application of pesticides, training and certification of certain pesticide applicators, the enforcement of the Pesticide Applicators Law and Regulations, and for providing technical information relating to the proper and effective use of pesticides.

The supervisor of this program provides overall guidance and serves as the State's authority on matters relating to pesticide use and application (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 5-201 through 5-211).

TURF AND SEED SECTION

The objective of this Section is to assure the availability of sufficient quantities of certified turf and seed by directing and conducting certification programs in which turf and seed are produced to meet certain standards such as purity, variety, germination, and other quality factors. Seed or sod not meeting certification standards is rejected as a result of field inspections or laboratory analysis.

The program is conducted in cooperation with the Maryland Foundation Stocks Program through the Maryland Crop Improvement Association. The supervisor of this program serves as the State's authority on certified turfgrass and seed.

The Section also provides regulatory controls to assure accurate and complete labeling of seed and sod at the time of marketing, thus enabling the consumer to determine what he is purchasing prior to planting or installation. A State Testing Laboratory is operated for both service and regulatory testing to assure compliance with label claims. The regulatory phase involves inspection, testing, reporting results, and corrective actions for each turf and seed lot found to be in non-compliance with the provisions of the seed law (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-101 through 9-110; 9-201 through 9-213; 9-301 through 9-307).

WEED CONTROL SECTION

The primary goal of the Weed Control Section is to control and prevent the spread of the noxious weed Johnsongrass within the State. The Johnsongrass Control Program is basically designed to assist landowners in bringing Johnsongrass under control through their own efforts and through the joint efforts of the county and State as provided for in cooperative agreements with the various counties. Landowners are encouraged to file Johnsongrass Control Plans with the Department outlining methods and procedures for controlling Johnsongrass on their land. The Department is authorized to take regulatory actions against landowners who allow Johnsongrass to set seed on their property.

The Secretary of Agriculture has legislative authority to declare other noxious weeds and place them under a control program.

The program supervisor serves as the State's authority on weed control matters (Code Agriculture Article, secs. 9-401 through 9-405).