10-3-1969

University of Montana graduate student measures insect damage

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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10/3/69
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UM GRADUATE STUDENT
MEASURES INSECT DAMAGE

By Richard M. Weddle
UM Forestry Editor

MISSOULA---

Insect pests of Engelmann spruce cones destroy as much as 90 per cent of the annual seed crop.

In an effort to curb this destruction a University of Montana forestry doctoral student from Berkeley, Calif., Jerry Bringuel, is currently conducting a study near Missoula to determine what insect species attack the Engelmann spruce and how harmful each is to the tree.

Under the guidance of forest entomologist Dr. James H. Lowe Jr., Bringuel has gathered thousands of spruce cones and classified the insects found living in them.

Because some parasites do not actually live in the spruce cones, Bringuel must also climb to the tops of selected trees where he observes and catches insects as they fly to and from the cones. Insects collected in this manner are returned to the laboratory for classification and mounting.

Bringuel examines the cones collected throughout the growing season for insect activity and damage. Since the pests have different feeding habits, the damage caused by each species can thus be determined.

According to Bringuel, this information will enable foresters to concentrate their efforts on controlling the most destructive insects.

In his research Bringuel has already discovered at least 11 species of insects as yet unknown on Engelmann spruce. His study has also revealed that destruction by insects is much greater than was previously believed.

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