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Montana State University receives grant from Montana Lumber Manufacturers

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The Montana Lumber Manufacturers' Assn. has granted Montana State University $1,500 to assist Dr. Charles W. Waters of the Botany Dept. in research on mistletoe control, of utmost importance to Montana's forest economy, Dr. Gordon B. Castle, professor of zoology and director of the MSU Biological Station, announced.

Dr. Waters, who is carrying on studies of the dwarf mistletoe, will do part of the work next summer at the Biological Station on Flathead Lake, Dr. Castle said. He will work the remainder of the year in the Botany Dept. at MSU.

The work is especially important because pathologists predict that unless more is learned of the basic facts essential to the prevention and control of mistletoes, they may become the most damaging disease agency in the western forests, according to Dr. Castle. Lodge pine, Douglas fir, and larch, which are becoming increasingly important to Montana's forest economy, are the three species most widely attacked by mistletoe, he pointed out.

Disease accounts for over 50 per cent of the total growth loss incurred in forests, even though fire is generally regarded as the greatest enemy and insects probably kill more trees, Dr. Castle said. In western forests, where the incidence of dwarf mistletoe and other diseases is high, losses due to disease exceed loss by fire by almost six times, he noted.

Dr. Waters' studies will add to our knowledge of the physiological factors operative in this disease, an area in which more information is badly needed, Dr. Castle said.

"It is extremely gratifying to see a commercial organization give its moral and financial support to the initiation of studies in basic biology," Dr. Castle said. "We in the field are convinced that fundamental work of the kind which Dr. Waters proposes is essential if we are to make the eventual progress needed and desired in the more practical aspects of control."

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