

NOTE

Anomalous Tubercle Patterns Found on *Lymantria dispar* (L.)
Caterpillars in the Field in Maryland
(Lepidoptera: Lymantriidae)

The gypsy moth caterpillar is conspicuous by having a double row of colored spots along its dorsal surface during and after the fourth instar. The anterior 5 pairs are blue, while the posterior 6 pairs are a dull-to-bright red. These spots are dorsal tubercles that form the basal portion of hair tufts, and they represent outgrowths of the integument bearing numerous setal sockets (Traxler, J. 1977. N.Y. Entomol. Soc. 85: 71-97).

In the spring of 1986, I had occasion to observe gypsy moth caterpillars from nearly 50 locations in Northern Maryland, amounting to several thousand collected, and many thousands more observed in the field either by myself, or by collaborators Kathleen Tatman, Kevin Boyd, and Anne Wieber. From these, 17 individual caterpillars were collected having anomalous tubercle patterns. Eight had only the first 4 anterior spot-pairs blue while the 7 posterior spot-pairs were red. Four individuals were missing one red spot (never the same one); three individuals were missing a pair

of red spots (never the same pair), while one individual was missing 3 red spots. The final oddity was a caterpillar whose dorsal integument was albino along its entire length on the left side, while the right side was a normal mottled black. All dorsal tubercles were present, and of normal pigmentation, on this individual. All specimen were collected from 6 locations in northern Baltimore County, Maryland.

All of the above caterpillars appeared normal except for their color patterns. The 11 individuals not parasitized or diseased produced apparently normal pupae and adult females. If any of these patterns prove to be heritable, it could prove the basis of a marked strain of gypsy moths of potential utility in sterile-male release programs or for release-recapture ecological studies.

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