

## Switzerland

### Increase in Defoliation

According to the Sanasilva 2000 report released recently by the Government, the rate of defoliation in the country's forests increased sharply over the year, with no apparent explanation for the problem. The defoliation rate was particularly high among spruce and firtrees. In contrast, beech trees showed a low level of defoliation.

The results are to be included in the Crown Condition Report for Europe, a report from the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests, which includes defoliation data from nearly all European countries and is published annually. This cooperative programme was established in

1985 under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

While the rate of defoliation has increased significantly, the number of trees actually dying has remained stable. Although Swiss forests are not seen to be facing any immediate threat, a long-term threat exists in the form of increased soil acidification. The report states that levels of nitrates and other acidic substances are already too high and could increase the sensitivity of forests to droughts and storms in the next several decades.

