

GYPSY MOTH

What does the Gypsy Moth do?

Gypsy moths are a destructive and messy insect that will completely defoliate your trees if their populations are allowed to peak. Repeated defoliation over several repeated years can kill most trees as the tree's stored nutrient reserves are depleted.



The caterpillars feed on the leaves of hardwood trees. Their favorites are oaks, poplars, lindens (basswood), willows, crabapples, and apple trees. By far the most preferred of these are oaks, especially large lone oaks. A lone oak tree can provide a safe place where populations can increase if not controlled. Once they reach a point where this tree can no longer support the appetites of the gypsy moth caterpillars, they start moving to surrounding trees.

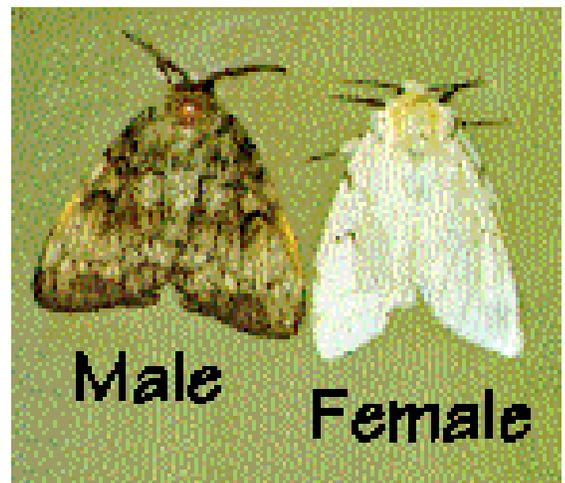
Now that the gypsy moths are here, it must be realized that they are here to stay. It is not possible to eradicate them completely, but keeping their population in check will minimize their impact.

Village gypsy moth management

In 2000 we saw the first significant numbers of gypsy moth caterpillars in the Village of Howard. Since then the Forestry Division has continued to survey publicly owned property (parks, right-of-way, easement corridors, etc...) and keep track of locations called in by residents.

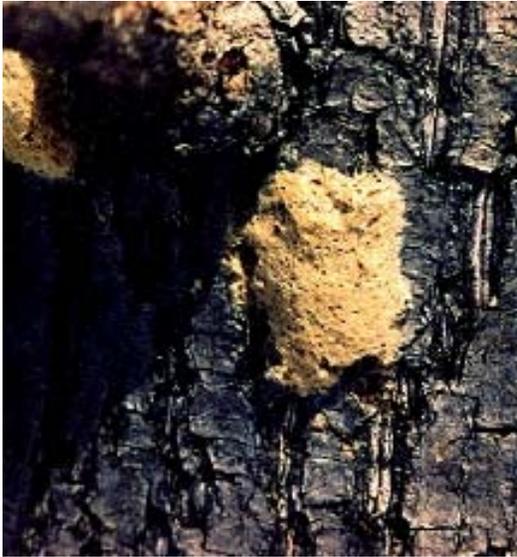
The Village annually identifies and treats trees found on public property to lower gypsy moth populations. This includes the spraying of egg masses with emulsified soybean oil and wrapping burlap around the trunks of trees during the caterpillar stage to catch as many as possible at that time. We have recently started using a liquid insecticide sprayed on the burlap that will kill only caterpillars as they contact it.

When caterpillar numbers obtain high enough populations the Village of Howard may qualify for the aerial spray program administrated by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This program requires a minimum of 20 contiguous acres that may be made up of different landowners; 25% canopy cover on residential or 50 % canopy on rural land, with over half having to be of the preferred host tree species; and over 500 egg masses per acre residential, 1000 rural. If your area meets all of



these qualifications we would qualify for a 50 % cost share program to spray your area. As you can see it is not easy to meet these requirements.

What you can do to help



Just searching a normal residential lot can take considerable time depending on the number of trees. Without your help it would be an impossible challenge to try and monitor the entire Village. If your desire is not to see defoliation of your property and your neighborhood in early to mid-summer, searching for egg masses must become an annual event every fall/winter.

Gypsy moth egg masses are deposited by female moths from late July through August. The masses are tan/buff colored, covered with fine hairs, oval in shape, and are typically 1 to 3 inches in length. They are usually found in on tree bark or on the underside of branches. However, egg masses can be found anywhere a caterpillar can crawl. The female gypsy moth will lay the eggs in any protected location, so look for the egg masses on wood piles, under the shutters of the house, yard ornaments and planters, on trailers, campers, and vehicles. If the egg masses are not noticed, they can “hitch-hike” to

new locations on such things as firewood or trailers, where they will hatch and start a new population.

If you find egg masses

Please call the Village Forestry Division with the location of the egg masses. The Village Forester will then schedule a time to come out to your property and confirm the identification and take you step by step through how to manage the gypsy moth problems on your property. The Forester will also map and quantify the egg masses on your property for possibly future aerial spraying.

Gypsy moth control options

There are several control options for the homeowner that finds egg masses on their property. Spraying egg masses with emulsified soybean oil (Golden Pest Spray Oil) will smother and thus kill the eggs. Spraying the egg masses from September until mid-April, prior to caterpillar emergence, is crucial. This product is mixed 50/50 with water and can be sprayed with a small hand sprayer or a garden pesticide sprayer. It is recommended to add food coloring to the mixture so you can see which eggs masses have been sprayed; blue works best. Always follow the directions on the container the oil comes in.

A more time consuming, but less costly, method is to scrape the egg masses into a container and either microwave for 2 minutes or cover with soapy water for 2 days.

If the eggs have already hatched and the caterpillars are present, wrapping the tree trunk with burlap (or similar cloth) and collecting the caterpillars that hide underneath it will reduce the population. To destroy the caterpillars you can place them into a container and once again either microwave or cover in soapy water.



A new product containing Permethrin called *Eradicoat*, which is applied directly to the burlap, will kill caterpillars that contact it. Once again follow the package directions.

Caterpillars found on the lower part of the crown can also be sprayed directly with an insecticide containing the following: (1) Acephate – *Orthene* (2) Carbaryl – *Sevin* (3) Imidacloprid – *Merit*. Be sure to follow the directions on the label for each product.

For those property owners unable to spray themselves or can not reach egg masses higher in the tree crown can contact a local tree service or landscape maintenance company to perform this service.

Make sure you check for egg masses on all trees, shrubs, buildings, and any other objects on your property. They are most often found on the underside of branches, in the crevices of rough bark, or under roof overhangs. Remember, anywhere a caterpillar can crawl there may be egg masses, and each egg mass that is destroyed there will be 600 – 1000 caterpillars next spring.



For more information check out the WDNR website at www.gypsymoth.wi.gov. If you would like to report gypsy moths or have questions or concerns contact the Village Forester.

**HOWARD PARKS, RECREATION and FORESTRY DEPARTMENT
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