

GYPSY MOTHS



Why Are Gypsy Moths So Abundant Right Now?

Gypsy moth populations rise and fall in cycles, so some years they are highly apparent while other years appear barely noticeable. This year, because populations are high, more tree defoliation is being observed.

Populations of gypsy moths usually remain high for two to three years, and then collapse when a disease called the Nucleopolyhedrosis Virus (NPV) wipes out large numbers of caterpillars. When populations are high and moths must compete for food, they become more susceptible to disease, which is why NPV is able to stop the outbreak.

For more information visit:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/83118.html>

Steps Homeowners Can Take

- Any egg masses can be scraped into a bucket with soapy water or detergent, buried, or burnt. Keeping an active lookout for new masses and removing them will prevent extreme defoliation.
- For a more active approach, insecticides for gypsy moths can be found online and in garden centers. Insecticides are divided into two general groups: microbial/biological and chemical.
- *Microbial and biological pesticides:* this category of insecticides is most effective on small, young caterpillars, and must be ingested to be effective. Caterpillars become more resistant to microbial pesticides as they mature, so these pesticides are most effective when caterpillars are less than one inch long - **Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt)** is one example of a microbial pesticide.
- *Chemical insecticides:* These insecticides are highly toxic and can have a negative impact on many beneficial native insects such as bees, as well as nesting birds.
- For defoliated trees, not having enough water is a serious issue. Make sure trees remain hydrated by running a hose at the base of the tree or setting up a sprinkler. Even though hardwood trees that have been completely defoliated may look dead, these trees have the ability to re-flush and grow new leaf buds which provide enough energy for the tree to survive.

1. Gypsy Moth. (n.d.). Retrieved September 09, 2020, from

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/83118.html>

2. "How to Get Rid of Gypsy Moths." *Planet Natural Research Center*, 25 Mar. 2018,

www.planetnatural.com/pest-problem-solver/tree-pests/gypsy-moth-control/.

3. "Dealing with Gypsy Moth Around Your Home or Property." *Integrated Pest*

Management,

www.canr.msu.edu/ipm/invasive_species/Gypsy-Moth/gypsy-moth-around-home.