

## Gypsy Moth Treatment & Control

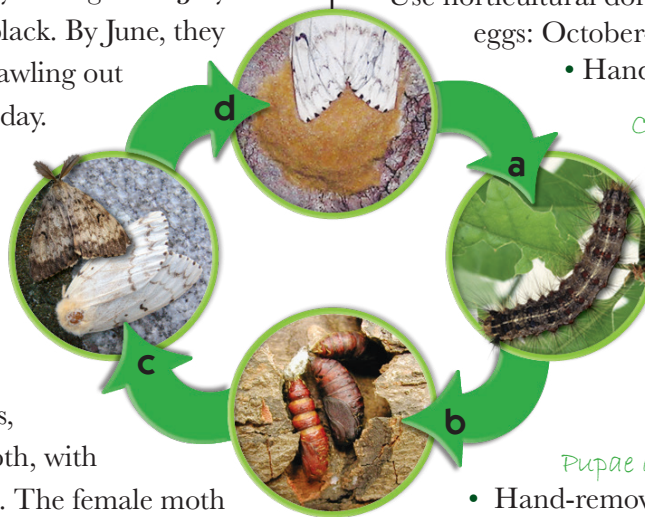
The gypsy moth is an invasive pest that was detected in Wisconsin in the 1990s, and is firmly established in the eastern and central part of the state. During periods of high populations, the gypsy moth will strip trees of their leaves and can defoliate entire neighborhoods by late June. While healthy trees can survive, weak or stressed trees will often decline rapidly and die. Gypsy moths are expert "stow-aways", often traveling from spot to spot on almost anything in your yard- clay pots, vehicles, bicycles, and especially firewood!

### Lifecycle and Identification

Effective treatment for gypsy moth is in knowing its lifecycle. One of two most vulnerable stages for treatment is early in the larval stage. (a) The larvae (caterpillars) are present from May through mid-July. At first, they are very small and black. By June, they are quite visible and active, crawling out of the tree canopy during the day.

The caterpillar is bristly with two rows of dots along its back-6 pairs of red near the rear, and 4 pairs of blue near a striped black head.

By mid-July, the moths then pupate (b) for about two weeks, transforming into an adult moth, with emergence in July and August. The female moth is larger than the male, and is white with V-shaped marking on the wings. The male is smaller, brown and has feathery antennae. (c) Within two weeks, the gypsy moths mate and perish, leaving behind firm, golden tan egg masses full of up to 1,000 eggs.



The masses are easy to recognize and you can find them just about anywhere, and they are also readily treatable. (d) These will remain until the following May when the cycle begins again.

### Susceptible Trees

Gypsy moth feed on a multitude of shrubs and trees, but prefer Oak, Aspen, Apple, Crabapple, Tamarack, White Birch, Witch Hazel, Mountain Ash, Basswood, Ironwood and Linden. They are also known to feed on Maple, Walnut, Chesnut, Hickory, Cherry, Hemlock, Elm, Hackberry, Beech and Boxelder.

### Gypsy Moth Controls

Management of the gypsy moth depends on the time of year as the moth develops through its lifecycle. We will recommend the best course of action to take and when.

#### Egg Masses

- Use horticultural dormant oil application to suffocate eggs: October-April
- Hand-remove and dispose of eggs

#### Caterpillar

- Apply bug barrier band on tree trunks to prevent caterpillars from climbing into tree by late April and subsequent burlap band in June
- Spraying of bacterial insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Btk) in May

#### Pupae and Moth

- Hand-remove all brown-shelled pupae from various surfaces in July

#### Other Options

- Spray with botanical insecticides
- Soil systemic insect control
- Trunk injectable insect control