

# FOREST HEALTH: GYPSY MOTH

## WHAT IS A GYPSY MOTH?

The **Gypsy Moth** is an invasive leaf-eating insect imported from Europe. They get their name from their ability to travel by attaching to various objects. With very few natural enemies and an appetite for over 300 tree species, the gypsy moth has established itself throughout the southern Canada. It now ranks among the most destructive pests to trees and shrubs in the country. The most direct effect of the gypsy moth is defoliation, which causes reduced growth or mortality of trees and shrubs as they become more vulnerable to disease, pests, and environmental stressors.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- When camping or at the cottage, inspect all outdoor articles and vehicles for egg masses. Be sure to remove and destroy any “hitchhikers.”
- When using firewood buy it locally and burn it on site to avoid moving invasive pests.
- When an egg mass is observed it should be scraped off with a knife and dropped into a bucket filled with hot water and household bleach or ammonia. Egg masses can be found on anything from tree trunks to outdoor furniture
- Caterpillars and pupae can be handpicked and crushed. This can cause skin irritations in some individuals. As a precaution, gloves should be worn when handling them.



## GYPSY MOTH LIFE CYCLE

### 1. EGG MASS



- Female lays one fuzzy, buff coloured egg mass
- Irregularly shaped about the size of a quarter
- Contains 500 - 1000 eggs
- Dormant throughout winter, hatching in the spring
- Can be found on a variety of surfaces from tree trunks to outdoor furniture

### 2. LARVA (CATERPILLAR)



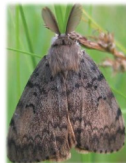
- Can grow up to 2½” in length
- Has 5 pairs of blue spots and 6 pairs of red spots
- Eats up to 3 square feet of leaves in its lifetime
- Feeds for 5 - 6 weeks during late spring to summer

### 3. PUPA (COCOON)



- Size ranges from ¾” - 1½”
- Immobile stage when caterpillar develops into an adult moth
- Dark reddish-brown
- Tough, leathery appearance
- Can be found mid - late summer

### 4. ADULT MOTH



- Emerges in mid - late summer (MALE)

- Wingspan from ¾” - 1½”
- Feathery antennae
- Jagged bands on forewings (FEMALE)



- Wingspan ranges from 1–2”
- White with brown jagged marks on wings
- CANNOT FLY
- Produces one egg mass and dies

Gypsy Moth is a very destructive insect, and trees which have been heavily defoliated due to Gypsy Moth feeding, coupled with other stress factors such as drought or other insect damage can result in branch dieback or tree mortality.

## HELP MONITOR GYPSY MOTH POPULATIONS

VOLUNTEER TO BE TRAINED TO MONITOR POPULATION LEVELS IN YOUR WOODLOT.

Contact the Norfolk County Forest Conservation Service at 519-426-5999 ext. 2224.

Only by knowing the population can we take action to prevent another massive outbreak.



Individuals interested in learning more about forestry are encouraged to join the Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association. For more information please visit [www.norfolkwoodlots.com](http://www.norfolkwoodlots.com).