

Although gypsy moth caterpillars feed primarily on deciduous tree species such as oak or aspen, this insect is known for its wide-ranging appetite. When populations of gypsy moths are very high, the caterpillars quickly devour the leaves of their preferred host tree species. Once their favored food source disappears, the hungry caterpillars don't hesitate to seek out new sources of food. When this occurs, almost any deciduous or conifer tree, shrub or other landscape plant may be at risk of being subject to some amount of defoliation.

- Place a band of burlap folded over a cord around the tree trunk, about five feet above the ground (most effective from March to August). Gypsy moth caterpillars will hide under the burlap and can be easily removed and destroyed by dropping them in soapy water.
- Keep your trees and shrubs healthy by watering and fertilizing as needed. This may reduce the pests and diseases attracted to your foliage and lessen the damage done if they are attacked.

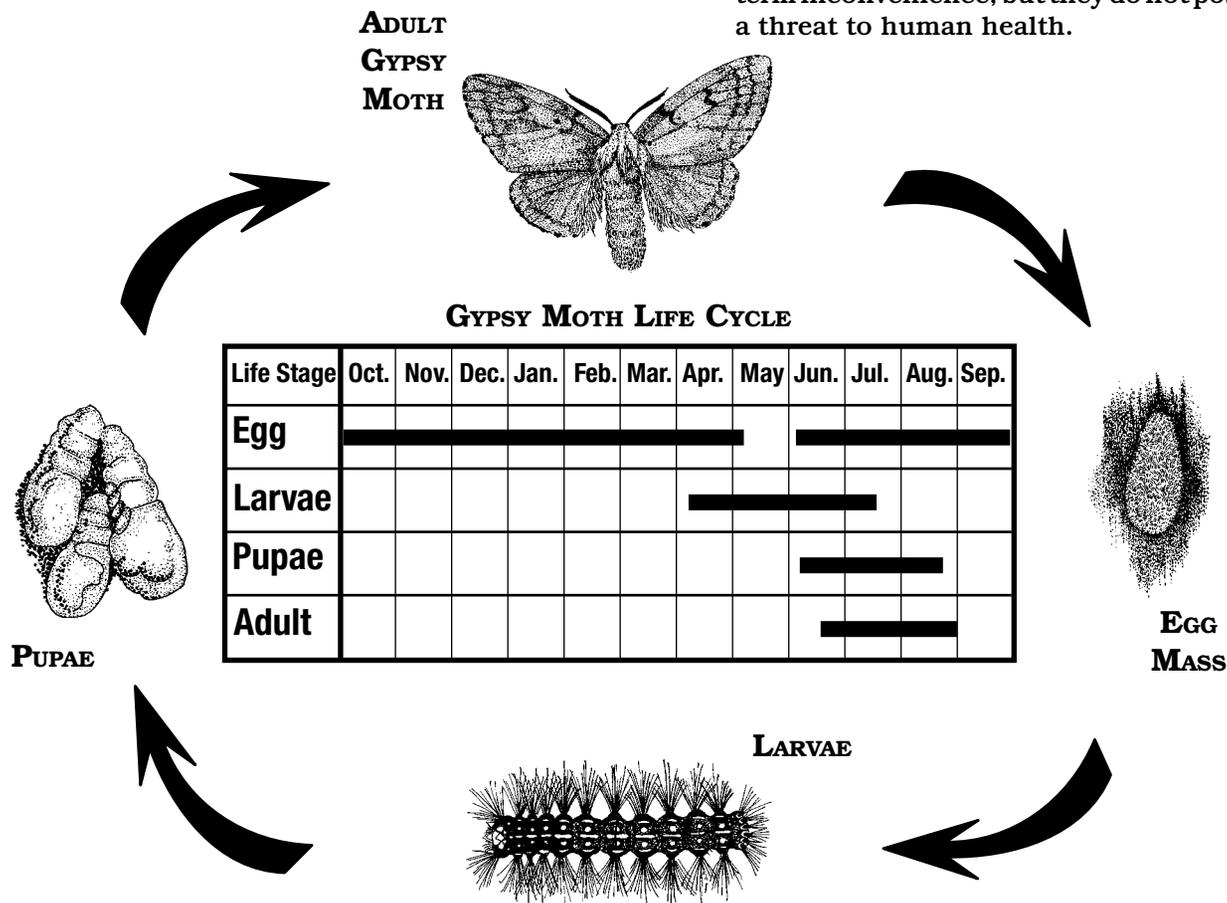
### WHAT TO AVOID WHEN CONTROLLING GYPSY MOTHS:

- ⊘ Don't cut down a tree that appears to be dead immediately after defoliation. Wait until spring to see if the tree recovers.
- ⊘ Traps designed to catch and eliminate the gypsy moth do not work. They do not control outbreaks because there is no hope of trapping enough individual moths to prevent their spread.
- ⊘ Don't panic! Gypsy moths may create a barren looking landscape and a short-term inconvenience, but they do not pose a threat to human health.

TREES AND SHRUBS MOST AT RISK TO DEFOLIATION BY GYPSY MOTHS:
▶▶ All oak ( <i>Quercus</i> )
▶▶ Aspen and poplar ( <i>Populus</i> )
▶▶ Gray, paper, and river birch ( <i>Betula</i> )
▶▶ All willow ( <i>Salix</i> )
▶▶ All apple and crabapple ( <i>Malus</i> )
▶▶ All thornapple and hawthorne ( <i>Craetagus</i> )
▶▶ White pine ( <i>Pinus</i> )
▶▶ Blue spruce ( <i>Picea</i> )
▶▶ Basswood ( <i>Tilia</i> )
▶▶ Sweetgum ( <i>Liquidambar</i> )
▶▶ Witch hazel ( <i>Hamamelis</i> )
▶▶ Juneberry or serviceberry ( <i>Amelanchier</i> )
▶▶ Mountain ash ( <i>Sorbus</i> )
▶▶ Hazelnut ( <i>Corlus</i> )

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOUR YARD AND PROPERTY:

- When gypsy moth outbreaks are predicted, inspect your property in the winter for egg masses. This includes woodpiles, stone walls, and lawn furniture. An egg mass can be killed by dropping it in a bucket of soapy or bleach water; be careful to avoid skin contact.



## BEFORE YOU ACT:

Gypsy moths are here to stay and Ohioans will have to learn to live with them. As with other pest animals, different levels of action may be required at different locations. You have several options:

- 1) Do nothing.
- 2) Protect individual trees.
- 3) Apply control substances. Some that have been used include:

*Entomophaga maimaiga* is a fungus imported to kill gypsy moth larvae. It works very well and as yet has no known effect on non-target animals. This fungus occurs in soil and can be spread by sharing soil samples for application against gypsy moths.

**Gypchek®** is a manufactured version of a naturally occurring virus, **Nucleopolyhedrosis virus (NPV)**. Gypsy moth caterpillars are destroyed by the virus when they are stressed by limited food sources or other factors. **Gypchek®** is expensive, more difficult to apply, and may kill a few other species of moths closely related to the gypsy moth.

**Bt**, which stands for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring bacteria, is formulated for application to foliage in the spring. It kills the caterpillars of all butterflies and moths that eat the leaves.

**Dimilin®**, a pesticide designed to kill all insects and invertebrates that molt by preventing the molting process. **Dimilin®** is not approved for use over water. It can last in the environment for several

months. All insects in all stages of life are subject to its effects, including those insects (caterpillars in particular) used as food for birds, as well as butterflies and moths.



Ohio Division of Wildlife  
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G  
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693

Ted Strickland, Governor  
Sean D. Logan, Director  
David M. Graham, Chief

An Equal Opportunity Employer - M/F/H

Publication 198  
(R199)

# GYPSY MOTHS IN OHIO



A native of temperate Europe, Asia, and northern Africa, the gypsy moth is an import that escaped from a Medford, Massachusetts laboratory in 1869. Since then, gypsy moth caterpillars have defoliated large numbers of trees throughout the northeastern United States.

Quarantine and control efforts by state and federal agencies initiated prior to the turn of the century continue today. These endeavors have resulted in varied, localized success, but the gypsy moth continues to expand its range.



Gypsy moths spread into Ohio from Michigan and Pennsylvania and will gradually extend their range throughout the Buckeye State, with highest densities in forested regions. Based on the persistence the moth has shown in other states to various measures to contain it, it is unlikely this insect pest will be eliminated from Ohio with techniques presently available.