



GROVELAND TOWNSHIP

Oakland County

So – you have gypsy moths!

The following suggestions and recommendations have been adapted from Michigan.gov (invasive species) and Michigan State University (Integrated Pest Management).

1. Keep Your Trees Healthy:

The first tactic to combat gypsy moth devastation is to make sure your trees remain healthy – water trees regularly and avoid tree damage as best as possible. When trees become heavily defoliated from moths, drought stress increases the chance for significant problems. MSU suggests the following:

“...water [trees] once a week during dry periods in the summer and fall. Let a hose run slowly near the base of the tree for a few hours once a week. Alternatively, place a sprinkler between the trunk and the drip line of the canopy. Set an empty can or plastic container near the sprinkler and let the sprinkler run until an inch of water has accumulated in the container. Avoid compacting the soil or damaging the root system of trees, which can affect water uptake. Also, be careful with lawn mowers, weed whips, snow shovels and other equipment. Wounds increase the risk that trees will become infected by disease.”



Even trees that have been defoliated will likely develop new foliage mid-summer, however, consecutive years of mass defoliation will take a toll. Maintaining the health of the tree(s) is one of the best preventative methods against gypsy moth devastation.

2. Prevent Attacks/Protect Your Trees:

When gypsy moths strike, there are methods to combat their efforts. The two main methods recommended by both MSU and Michigan.gov are: manually removing caterpillars/eggs and/or spraying your trees with *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (BTK).

The first strategy, manual removal, includes locating caterpillars or egg sacs (found on trees, firewood, outdoor furniture, etc) and either scraping them into buckets filled with soapy water, or burning them.

The second strategy includes the application of BTK Spray. BTK is a bacterium that naturally occurs in the soil but can be lethal to certain caterpillars and moths. According to Michigan.gov, “the best time to spray is when caterpillars are small, usually mid-May through early June. If you decide to apply pesticides on you own property, be sure to choose an EPA-registered pesticide and apply it according to label directions.”

A third strategy sometimes used includes the “banding” of trees to stop the migration of caterpillars moving up the tree. Additional information can be found online, however, strategies need to be implemented to protect other wildlife if these methods are used.