

Gypsy Moth Management (from Virginia Cooperative Extension)

Egg mass treatments (prior to egg hatch)

Since each egg mass contains from 500 to 1000 eggs, destruction of egg masses before hatch can have an impact on populations. Search your property, including trees, outdoor furniture and play equipment, for egg masses.

Option 1: using a putty knife or similar tool, scrape the egg masses into a plastic bag or can. Once collected, empty the contents into a container of soapy water (dish soap works well) and soak for a day or two.

Option 2: An alternative to physically removing egg masses is to saturate egg masses before hatch with a solution of horticultural oil. This will smother the gypsy moth larvae (caterpillars) within the eggs. You can make your own spray using vegetable oil and water and dishwashing liquid:

Mix one tablespoon of liquid soap with one cup of vegetable oil. Mix 1-1/2 tablespoons of your soap/oil mixture for every one cup of water. Shake mixture well before spraying. Use a small spray bottle, household sprayer, or "supersoaker" water gun to soak the egg masses. Do not use motor oil or mineral oils. Spray the oil onto the egg mass until it is saturated. This also works on masses where the larvae are just starting to emerge but still around the egg mass.

Tree banding (after egg hatch)

Some young larvae and most older gypsy moth larvae tend to migrate down the tree during the day to seek shelter. A variety of methods can be used to capture and kill older larvae. Homeowners should be aware that while banding may result in the death and removal of a large number of caterpillars, it isn't guaranteed to significantly reduce the population.

- Place burlap bands around tree trunks to provide a resting place for larvae, which then can be removed and placed in a

container of soapy water. Wrap a strip of burlap 12-18 inches wide around the tree at chest height, and tie a string around the burlap 6 inches from the top. Let the top 6 inches flop over the string. Check the bands every day from mid-afternoon to about 6 PM. Use a knife or tongs to flip caterpillars into soapy water. Don't handle the caterpillars as their hairs can cause a rash. Discard the caterpillars when they are dead.

- Barrier bands can be made using duct tape and a sticky substance such as petroleum jelly or Tanglefoot, available at Lowe's. Larvae become stuck on these bands and can be removed or left to die. Wrap about 10 inches of duct tape around the tree with the sticky side toward the tree. Don't leave areas where larvae can crawl under the band. Spread Tanglefoot or petroleum jelly on the outside of the duct tape. Do not get Tanglefoot or petroleum jelly on the tree bark as it can damage the tree.

Additional information is available at:

https://www.canr.msu.edu/ipm/invasive_species/Gypsy-Moth/index