

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

SPONGY MOTH

(*Lymantria dispar dispar*, *Lymantria dispar japonica*)

Photo Credit: Phil Myers, Museum of Zoology,
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ANIMAL?

DESCRIPTION

- Late instar caterpillars are blackish and hairy, with five pairs of blue dots and six pairs of red dots along the back.
- Males have a 2.5 cm wingspan, are light brown on the body and wings with a darker brown wavy pattern along forewings.
- Females are nearly white and bigger than males and usually have a dark wavy pattern across forewings.
- Both sexes have a chevron marking pointing to a dot on the forewing which is characteristic for this moth in North America.
- Females from the subspecies *L. dispar dispar* are flightless and lay eggs in the same tree they emerge from.
- Females from the subspecies *L. dispar japonica* are flight capable and can fly to other trees to lay eggs, which hastens dispersal of the pest.



REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

Download the App!



www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

PRIMARY THREAT:

In B.C., both hardwoods and conifers would be at risk if Spongy Moths were to become established.

SPREAD

Spongy moths reproduce sexually, creating one generation annually. Eggs are laid on hard surfaces, in a variety of locations and left to overwinter. Eggs may then be transported over long distances on the surface they are attached to. Once larvae hatch in the spring, they may then be transported several kilometers by ballooning (sailing on the wind using silk thread). Caterpillars feed on trees and shrubs until they are ready to pupate. All adults except females from the subspecies *L. dispar dispar* can fly long distances to colonize new locations.

Spongy Moths can be found in temperate forest environments. *L. dispar japonica* can be found on a wider range of host plants and exist in regions of cooler temperatures than *L. dispar dispar*.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-health/invasive-forest-pests/lymantria>



Photo credit: Hannes Lemme,
Bugwood.ca



SPONGY MOTH *(Lymantria dispar dispar and japonica)*



Photo Credit: Haruta Ovidiu, University of Oradea, Bugwood.org

DISTRIBUTION & STATUS

Spongy Moths are native to Europe, North Africa and Asia. They are not established in B.C. Spongy Moths are detected from time to time during annual surveys lead by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. As this is a regulated pest, eradication programs are initiated if established populations of Spongy Moths are found anywhere in B.C.



Photo Credit: USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

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LOOK-ALIKES:

In B.C., Spongy moths may be confused with numerous other moth species. Visit the Ministry [website](#) for in-depth descriptions on other caterpillars that could be mistaken for Spongy Moth caterpillars.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Raise awareness to stop the spread.
- Be able to recognize Spongy Moths in different life stages.
- Report sightings to help in early detection.
- Do not move objects that could be carrying egg masses to new locations.
- Control egg masses by scraping them off, or otherwise removing them from the surface of infested good and placing them in ethanol.

DID YOU KNOW?

- It is believed that climate suitability for Spongy Moths in Northern regions will increase in the coming years due to trends in global climate warming.



Photo Credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service

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