

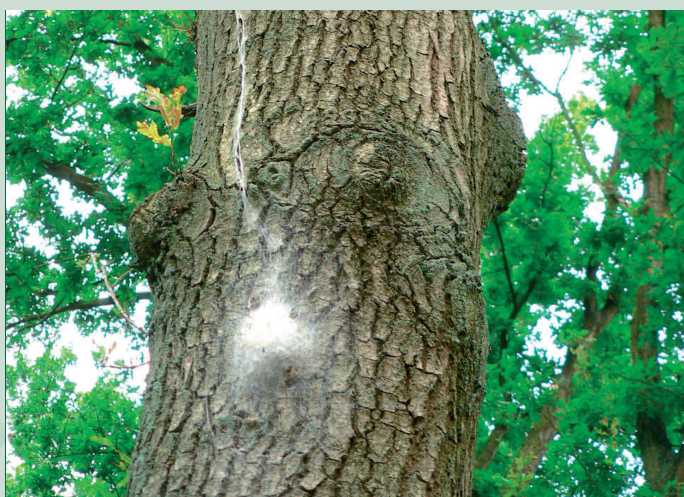
Help us eradicate this pest

Oak processionary moth



Caterpillars of the oak processionary moth – named after their habit of forming ‘nose-to-tail’ processions.

The oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*), a native of mainland Europe, is breeding on oak trees in the Pangbourne area of West Berkshire. Its caterpillars feed on oak leaves and produce silken nests on the trunks and branches of affected trees. As well as seriously damaging trees, the caterpillars can pose a risk to human and animal health.



A silken nest on the trunk of an oak tree.

L. Morad, Wageningen UR, The Netherlands

The tiny hairs from the caterpillar can be blown on the wind and lead to itching skin lesions and, less commonly, sore throats and eye problems. You are advised not to touch the caterpillar or a nest – even if it is an empty nest. If you think you may have been exposed and have an itching skin rash and/or conjunctivitis or other symptoms, contact your GP or call NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

If you are planning to fell or carry out tree surgery on oak trees, please ask us for guidance on the safe disposal of the material. Call 0131 314 6414 and speak to one of the Plant Health team, or email plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

If you think you have seen the caterpillars or one of their nests or webs, call us on 01420 22255 or email christine.tilbury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk with exact details of the location (include a digital photograph if you have one). You may also get in touch with your local council contact (see below):

Arthur Cullen (Senior Tree Officer)

Tel: 01635 519675

E-mail acullen@westberks.gov.uk

Remember: this species is most likely to be seen on oak trees (see photo at top left for leaf identification).

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU –

DO NOT touch the caterpillars or nests.

DO NOT try to deal with them yourself. Effective treatment requires specialist skills and careful timing. Contact with nests or caterpillars can endanger your health.

WARN children not to touch caterpillars or nests and **KEEP** pets away.

For more information visit: www.forestry.gov.uk/oakprocessionarymoth
or call: 0845 FORESTS (0845 367 3787)