

spongy moth

WISCONSIN
SPONGY MOTH PROGRAM

background

exotic pest

- Native to Europe and Asia
- Introduced to North America in 1869 near Boston
- Distributed from Maine south to Virginia, and west through Wisconsin
- Well established in eastern and central Wisconsin and is spreading westward into Minnesota

damage

- Caterpillars feed on the leaves of up to 500 species of trees and shrubs, favoring oak
- May defoliate several million acres in the U.S. during the summer months
- Defoliated trees grow a new set of leaves, but are weakened and may be killed by other pests
- The first defoliation occurred in Wisconsin in 1999

lifecycle

- Caterpillars emerge from late April to late May and begin feeding
- Stop feeding and pupate, forming a cocoon in late June to mid-July
- Adult moths emerge from pupae, mate and die in mid-July to early August
- Eggs overwinter in a protective egg mass
- Each female lays an average of 600 eggs in an egg mass

rapid spread

- Spongy moths thrive in many habitats because they are not picky eaters
- Because they're not native to North America, they have few natural enemies
- Egg masses are often moved long distances and into new areas on firewood, vehicles, tree trimmings, and other outdoor items

Wisconsin's program goals

- The "Slow the Spread" Program aims to delay the establishment of spongy moth in the western part of the state and to eradicate isolated populations there

1-800-642-MOTH | [http: spongymoth.wi.gov](http://spongymoth.wi.gov)