

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 Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, Richmond Upon Thames and Hammersmith & Fulham Boroughs. 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. Morool, 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 caterpillars or nests, even empty nests. If you think you might 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 have any tree surgery done on oak trees, please consult the Forestry Commission first for guidance on safe disposal of the material. Call 0131 314 6414 or email plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

This species is most likely to be seen on oak trees (see top picture for leaf identification). If you think you have seen the caterpillars or one of their nests/webs, contact:

Forest Research (01420 22255) or email christine.tilbury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk, or

Your local council contact:

JULIAN FOWLES
07956 509 633

You can send us a digital photograph with your report.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU:

DO NOT touch the caterpillars or the nests.

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

WARN children not to touch caterpillars or nests.

KEEP pets away.

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