IMPACTS & PREVENTION

# SPONGY MOTH

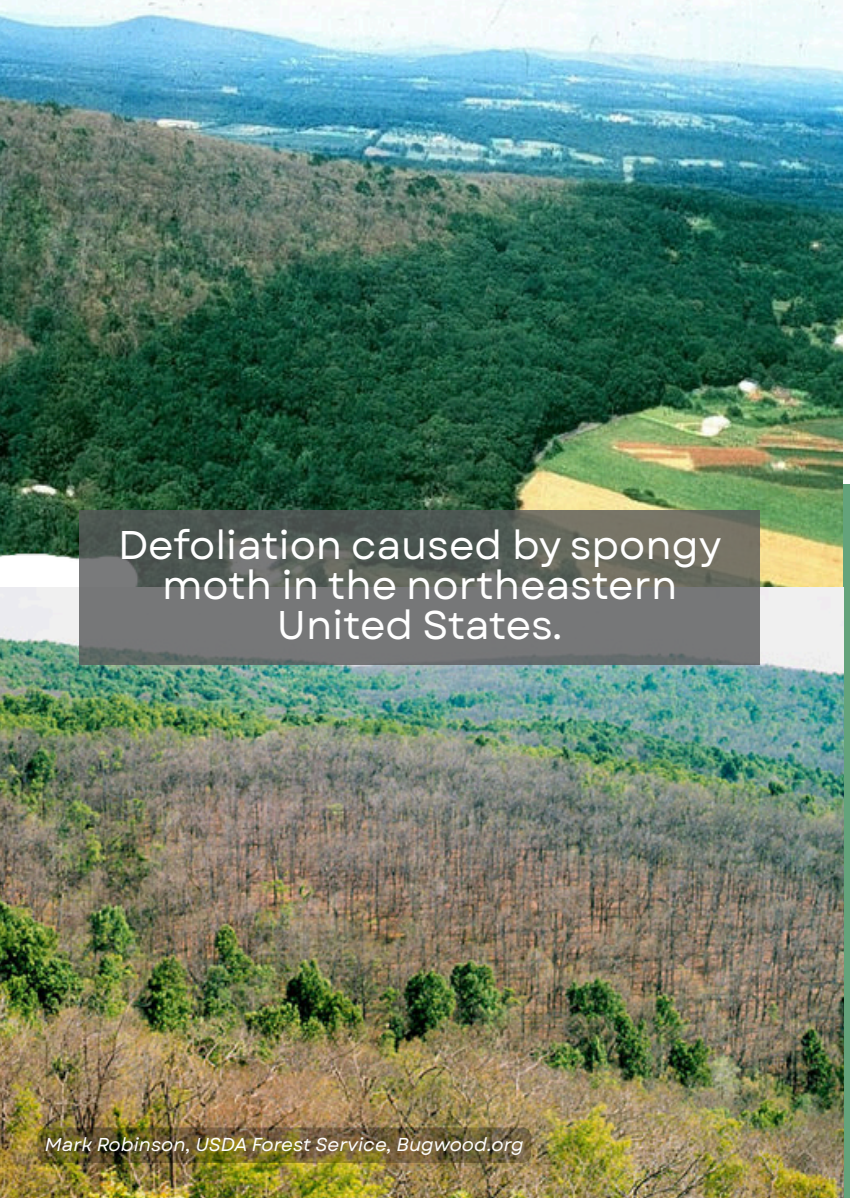
Invasive Species Council of BC

Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*) is a voracious invasive moth whose defoliating caterpillars feed on over 300 species of shrubs and trees. Originally from Europe and North Africa, spongy moth populations have been found in B.C. but they have not become permanently established.



## A SMALL INSECT WITH A MASSIVE IMPACT.

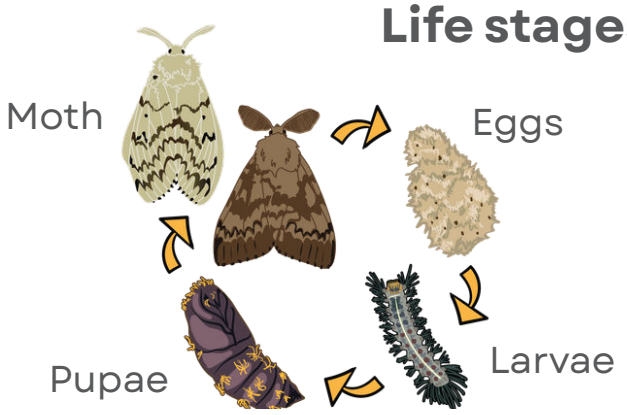
*Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Forestry , Bugwood.org*



Defoliation caused by spongy moth in the northeastern United States.

*Mark Robinson, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org*

## Life stages




## Why It Matters

Spongy moth caterpillars strip foliage, weakening trees and reducing food and habitat for wildlife. Severe outbreaks can alter forest composition and impact understory plants.

**ONTARIO'S 2021 RECORD OUTBREAK DEFOLIATED 1.8 MILLION HECTARES.**

# A MAJOR THREAT FOR THE FOREST & BEYOND...

Spongy moths can impact B.C.'s forestry, nursery, and agricultural industries by damaging trees, increasing management costs, and lowering property values. Forest damage can reduce recreational value by thinning canopies and affecting landscape quality. Caterpillar hairs may also cause skin irritation in some people.

Caterpillars have five pairs of blue dots followed by six pairs of red dots along their back.

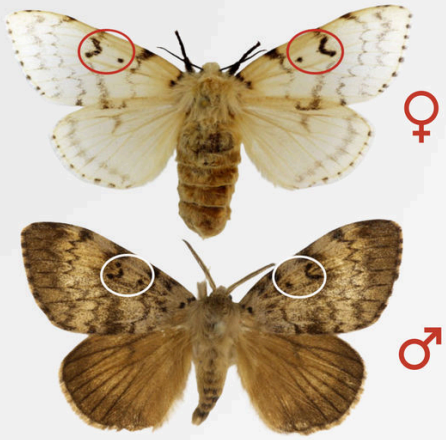


## What Can You Do?

**Travel is a main vector of spread!** When travelling or moving from areas with spongy moth populations, thoroughly examine outdoor items for spongy moth eggs, larvae, pupae or adults. Check items such as firewood, camping gear, vehicles, RVs and outdoor patio furniture, lawn ornaments, potted plants, bird houses, etc.




**Also present in the northeastern U.S.*




D. Holden, CFIA, 2018

Chevron mark pointing to dot on the wing.

Spongy moth detections are rare in B.C. but signs at any life stage should be **reported**:

- Look for egg masses, caterpillars with distinct pairs of dots, pupae, and moths with distinct markings on the wings.
- Take several photos of your sightings and note the location.
- Email **spongy.moth@gov.bc.ca.**
- More information: **gov.bc.ca/spongymoth.**

**Touching spongy moths with bare hands may cause skin or eye irritation.*

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