Thank you for contacting the Roscommon County Gypsy Moth Program.

Gypsy moth populations are very high this year in several areas around the state, and in surrounding states. The best thing you can do is to proactively manage gypsy moth on your property and encourage your neighbors to do the same. For those with larger or heavily wooded properties, we recommend focusing your efforts right now in the area around your home.

Attached is our [landowner management tip sheet](http://www.roscommoncounty.net/DocumentCenter/View/1687/Gypsy-Moth-Management-Strategies--Identification-Guide) with strategies for managing gypsy moth all through the year. **If you use barrier bands, it is advisable that you monitor them daily and remove caterpillars gathered there into a container with a strong solution of dish soap and water and let sit for 24 hours**; otherwise, the caterpillars will simply move to a different tree to feed. For your convenience, I have also attached the directions for both types of barrier band. Please remove barrier bands by mid-August for the health of the trees and other species.

If you have large numbers of caterpillars gathering on your deck, cement pad, siding, or other flat surfaces, you can suck them up with a **shop vac** with a strong solution of dish soap and water in the vac tub. Let them soak for 24 hours to kill them. You can also **spray the caterpillars directly with a strong solution of dish soap and water**. (You want it to be foamy when it hits the caterpillar, so a spray bottle or pump sprayer is a good applicator.) This can be applied to the caterpillars on your structures as well as to those in your trees. Please be cautious as this can make surfaces slippery. Some plants may be sensitive to the soap, so you may want to test an area first before spraying caterpillars on or near prized vegetation. It's good to rinse the trees and soil daily to dilute the soap residue. Amphibians are very sensitive and exposure to soap or pesticides can be lethal.

You can find information on **Btk (Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki)** [here](http://www.roscommoncounty.net/219/Bacterial-Insecticide). Btk is the bacterial insecticide we use in our suppression spray treatment. This is most effective on small caterpillars in their first and second instar stages. If you are still seeing lots of caterpillars less than 1/2", it might be worth spraying smaller trees or lower foliage on tall trees where you see gypsy moth feeding. It must be ingested by the caterpillar to be effective. Gypsy moth prefer oaks, poplar, birch, and fruit trees. Look for holes in leaves, leaf litter, frass, and caterpillars in the tree. (It's too late for Btk to be effective this year, but it's good information for the future.)

[Tractor Supply Company](https://www.tractorsupply.com/tsc/product/garden-safe-bt-worm-caterpillar-killer-concentrate-16-fl-oz-1074104?store=1929&cm_mmc=feed-_-GoogleShopping-_-Product-_-1074104&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI68WgxaHl8AIV921vBB0qBwVwEAQYASABEgI7-_D_BwE), [ACE Hardware](https://www.acehardware.com/departments/lawn-and-garden/insect-and-animal-control/insect-bait/7369465), [Home Depot](https://www.homedepot.ca/product/safer-btk-caterpillar-killer-100ml-concentrate/1000419082), and some garden stores carry different brands containing Btk. You might want to call your local store first to make sure they have it in stock. We use Btk because it is certified organic, and only affects young caterpillars--it won't harm pollinators, birds, pets, etc. Whatever product you use, make sure the label states it works on gypsy moth caterpillars.

If you have children, grandchildren, or young neighbors, we have partnered with 4-H for the 4-H Moth Busters Project. Learn more at our [website](http://www.roscommoncounty.net/218/Gypsy-Moth-Program).

During periods of hot, dry weather, trees impacted by gypsy moth could benefit from some water. Please see the hyperlink on the management tips sheet for information on **watering established trees**.

For more information, please visit our [**website**](http://www.roscommoncounty.net/218/Gypsy-Moth-Program). We also post information regularly on our [**Facebook page**](https://www.facebook.com/GypsyMothRoscommon). We encourage Roscommon County residents to share photographs of their gypsy moth experience with us. You may submit photos to this email or to our Facebook page. Any photos submitted may be used on Facebook, and in educational and promotional efforts.

Please share this information with your neighbors as well. The more people in your area actively managing gypsy moth on their properties, the better off everyone in the neighborhood will be.

Later in the season if you are still finding signs of gypsy moth infestation, please complete our [**online reporting form**](https://bit.ly/GypsyMoth2021) (<https://bit.ly/GypsyMoth2021>) to help us monitor the population across the county.

One last, important note: If you are traveling between infested areas (Roscommon County) and other areas that are not experiencing a gypsy moth infestation, please thoroughly clean and check your vehicle and any outdoor items you are transporting to avoid spreading gypsy moth.

Thank you for reporting and for managing gypsy moth on your property.

Rebecca Sova (she, her, hers)

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