

## How You Can Help

Winter moths are very hard to control, due to their life cycle. One effective way to combat this invasive species is to use tree bands. With this method, strips of cloth, paper, or plastic are wrapped around tree bases. Saran-wrap© works very well. Next, a sticky substance called Tanglefoot© is spread onto the wrapped area. This will catch female moths climbing up the tree. Supplies for this, including Tanglefoot©, can be found at some garden centers, including the Essex County Co-op. *Photo here*

## Topsfield Conservation Commission

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### Sources:

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## Topsfield Conservation Commission

## A Guide to Winter Moth Control in Topsfield



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## What is the Problem?

### *Wintermoth Operophtera brumata*



Fig. 1  
Male Wintermoth



Fig. 2  
Female Wintermoth



Fig. 3  
Wintermoth Caterpillar

## The Winter Moth

Winter moths have been eating much of America's foliage for the past decade. These moths are invasive to the area- they did not originate here. Winter moths were introduced to America by Europe. Currently, they can be found in many states on the east and west coasts, including California, Washington, Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

## Diet

Winter moths' diets include, but are not limited to oaks, maple, basswood, ash, crabapple, apple, blueberry, and spruce. They especially enjoy trees with fruit, such as apple, cherry, crabapple, and blueberry. The winter moth caterpillars tend to eat buds and growing leaf clusters, which quickly causes severe defoliation, especially during cool, long springs. According to UMass Extension, "in certain regions of Nova Scotia, this pest is responsible for 40% red oak mortality in forested stands."



Winter moth larvae cause severe damage to foliage, as seen in the photo above.

## Life Cycle

Winter moth eggs hatch in the spring, after about 20-50 Growing Degree Days. Once the larvae have climbed up the trees, they "balloon," meaning that they use buoyant strands of silk to disperse to other areas. The larvae are light green with white stripes running along the body. They can grow up to about one inch long. In mid-June, the larvae will burrow into the soil for the pupa stage, and emerge as moths in late November. Moths that are small, brown, and have a hairy appearance are males. The females are gray and wingless, and can be found on trees. After mating, eggs are dropped in clusters onto tree trunks, under bark, and on lichen. After this process, the life cycle is complete, and the moth dies.