



# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE GYPSY MOTH PROGRAM



Division of Plant Health, Plant Pest Control Section  
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## Landscape Trees and Shrubs for Gypsy Moth Infested Areas

The Gypsy Moth is one of the most destructive insect pests threatening the forest trees and ornamental plants in Ohio. The caterpillar stage of this insect damages trees and shrubs by feeding on the foliage. Once defoliated, the natural response of the trees and shrubs is to re-leaf with a second set of leaves. This process depletes food reserves and weakens the plants. Repeated defoliation will result in death of the trees and shrubs. The Gypsy Moth will feed on over 300 species of plants making it a serious pest problem in many urban landscapes.

The Gypsy Moth caterpillars have preferences for certain trees and shrubs on which to feed. Homeowners culturing trees and shrubs preferred by the caterpillars should anticipate some level of feeding and the associated damage, provided a local infestation is present. Homeowners should take the plant preferences into consideration when planning for plant replacements or future landscape plantings.

### Preferred Trees – Highly Susceptible to Gypsy Moth Caterpillar Feeding

Alder	Eastern Hophornbeam	Paper (White) Birch
American Oak (all species)	Gray Birch	Pine (all species)
Apple	Hawthorn	Quaking Aspen
Basswood	Hazelnut	River Birch
Bigtooth Aspen	Larch (Tamarack)	Serviceberry
Box Elder Maple	Lombardy Poplar	Spruce (all species)
Chestnut	Mountain Ash	Sumac (all species)
Eastern Hemlock		

Some trees and shrubs are not the first choice of feeding by the Gypsy Moth caterpillars. These plants are only at risk from defoliation if the local infestation is very high or the more preferred food sources have been depleted.

### Moderately Preferred Trees – Moderately Susceptible to Gypsy Moth Caterpillar Feeding

American Beech	Eastern Cottonwood	Redbud
American Elm	Hackberry	Sassafras
American Hornbeam	Hickory (all species)	Silver Poplar
Black Birch	Norway Maple	Slippery Elm
Black Cherry	Ohio Buckeye	Sourwood
Black Gum (Tupelo)	Paw Paw	Sugar Maple
Black Walnut	Pear	Sweet fern
Blueberries	Persimmon	Yellow Birch
Butternut	Pin, Choke Cherries	Yellow Buckeye
Cucumber tree	Red Maple	

A variety of tree and shrubs are not likely to be attacked by the feeding caterpillars. Essentially all other food sources in the area must be depleted before caterpillars are found on these plants. Feeding injury on the following trees should not be anticipated and would be good selections for planting establishment in areas with the potential for heavy local infestations of the Gypsy Moth.

**Least Preferred Trees – Low Susceptibility to Gypsy Moth Caterpillar Feeding**

American Holly	Greenbrier	Rhododendron
Ash (all species)	Honey Locust	Rubus (all species)
Azalea (all species)	Grape	Sarsaparilla
Baldcypress	Juniper	Sheep Laurel
Balsam Fir	Kentucky Coffee tree	Spicebush
Black Locust	Horse Chestnut	Striped Maple
Dogwood	Mountain Maple	Sycamore
Eastern Redcedar	Mulberry	Viburnum (all species)
Elderberry	Mountain Laurel	Yellow-poplar (Tulip tree)
Fraser Fir	Northern Catalpa	

In addition to plant selection, homeowners can take a number of steps to further reduce the likelihood that the plantings in their landscape will be damaged from Gypsy Moth caterpillar feeding. A few of these practices include:

- Keeping the landscape trees and shrubs in a healthy condition
- Planting a wide diversity of tree and shrub species, particularly favoring the species least preferred by the Gypsy Moth caterpillars.
- Physically removing the caterpillars under burlap bands, tangle foot, etc.
- Destroying egg masses found on trees, outbuildings, woodpiles, etc.
- Implementing the use of control products (i.e. pesticides) when necessary.

