



European Gypsy Moth – *Lymantria dispar dispar* (LDD) in Markham

Frequently Asked Questions - 2021

Updated on June 15, 2021

In response to the growing number of resident inquiries on the subject of European Gypsy Moth – *Lymantria dispar dispar* (LDD) infestations in Markham, the following frequently asked questions (FAQ) will provide information on the City's response to the 2021 outbreak.

Q – What is the City of Markham doing to City-owned trees?

A – In March and April 2021, the City of Markham deployed staff to manually remove and destroy LDD egg masses from more than 6,000 affected street trees. Egg mass surveys conducted in partnership with the Region of York, as well as data collected from resident feedback and street patrols informed a priority rating system for Markham neighbourhoods. We started with the areas of most severely infested neighbourhoods and worked on a descending order of priority until the caterpillars started to hatch.

The City continues to monitor Markham neighbourhoods to collect data that will inform future IPM strategies.

Q – What can I (resident) do to my tree?

A – From May to August, you can wrap your trees with burlap banding to trap and destroy LDD caterpillars. [Learn how to install burlap banding on your tree.](#)

From June to July, you can handpick caterpillars by removing them while wearing gloves, and place them in a bucket of soapy water for a day or two before disposing of them.

From August to April, scrape egg masses off of trees and place in a bucket of soapy water for a day or two before disposing of them.

Q – I have caterpillars on my tree what is happening?

A – The caterpillars are part of the growth cycle of the LDD. During this stage of growth, the caterpillars feed on the leaves of many different trees and plants.

Q – The leaves are gone from my tree, is the tree dead?

A – During severe outbreaks, trees can be completely defoliated. The tree may produce a new set of leaves but may also store the energy to set buds for next year's leaves. It is unlikely that the tree is dead. Even if all of the leaves are gone it is important to water the trees on your property to provide them with the energy to grow new leaves.

Q – Why is this happening this year?

A – LDD outbreaks typically occur every seven to 10 years. Markham realized large population numbers of LDD in 2020 and infestation levels are expected to be high again in 2021. LDD outbreaks tend to last anywhere between one to four years before naturally collapsing.

Q – What is the City doing to stop this or control it?

A – In addition to egg mass removal, the City is working with the Regional Municipality of York and the neighbouring municipalities to monitor the activity so we can track the size of the spread. This pest is not isolated to Markham and an effective solution requires coordination with neighbouring municipalities.



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Q – What is the City going to do next year?

A – Natural control factors such as disease, parasites and predators eventually combine to cause a collapse of these outbreaks. The City of Markham Operations Forestry staff will continue to work in partnership with the Regional Municipality of York invasive species specialists on monitoring efforts to assist in formulating recommendations for methods of control as required.

Q – What is the City’s approach?

A – The City’s response is an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach and part of the larger strategy being employed by the Region of York and all lower tier municipalities. IPM is a sustainable approach to managing pests that combines biological, cultural and physical factors to control in a way that targets a specific pest and minimizes impacts to others. At this time, the City of Markham has not employed spraying as a control measure.

Q – If I want to spray my trees can I do that?

A – Yes. We would recommend hiring a certified arborist who can safely provide this service. Treatments should be applied in early spring to be effective following the recommendations of the licensed applicator.

Q – Where is Markham monitoring activity?

A – While we have seen small pockets of activity in all wards within the City, the largest concentration of activity is in Wards 1, 3 and 4.

Q – I have more questions. Who can I ask?

A – Please contact the City of Markham Contact Centre at 905.477.5530, or by email at customerservice@markham.ca.

You can also visit the [York Region website](#) and [Province of Ontario’s website](#) for more information.