

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PARK & TREE DIVISION**

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Winter Moth Caterpillar Affecting Wellesley Trees

In Wellesley and throughout eastern Massachusetts the winter moth caterpillar has been defoliating trees during the spring. Under the authority of the Natural Resources Commission and the guidelines of the Wellesley Integrated Pest Management Policy, the Department of Public Works will be selectively ground spraying town trees to control winter moth caterpillars that are harmfully defoliating trees. Trees will be treated with Conserve #SC, a spinosad based product, E.P.A. Reg. #62719-291. Based on weather conditions and caterpillar populations applications will take place on April 16th thru May 28th. As needed. Hours of spraying will occur between 5am thru 10 am. All treated areas will be posted for 24 hours before and after applications. Maps delineating the town properties to be spray can be viewed at the DPW, Park & Tree Conference Room located at 30 Municipal Way.

For winter moth caterpillars affecting privately owned trees, we recommend that private property owners should consult with an arborist to inspect any heavily damaged trees and develop an overall treatment plan to protect trees. To find an arborist call 508-653-3320 or go on line to www.certifiedtreeandlawn.org. For more information about the winter moth and other landscape pests, go to www.umassgreeninfo.org for pictures, fact sheets and updates. For information about the Wellesley Integrated Pest Management Policy, go to www.wellesleyma.gov/nrc.

Perhaps the only good thing about this pest is that it will stop feeding in June and allow your tree a chance to possibly re-grow new leaves. Still, your tree has been severely stressed and will benefit from extra attention during the rest of the summer growing season and through the fall, until the leaves start to turn color and drop off. During this time make sure your tree is well watered to help the recovery process. Also, you should not fertilize your trees during this time. At this point consider developing a treatment program for the following spring. We hope that with proper state government support the University of Massachusetts Extension Service will be able to keep working on its program to introduce a natural predatory fly to control this pest. The success of this biological control program will work naturally to minimize the need for future spraying of this invasive and destructive pest that is damaging private and public shade trees in Massachusetts.

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