

# Live Oak Tussock Moth

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FIG. 1

Type Pest: chewing insect (*Orgyia detrita* Guérin-Ménéville)

Type Metamorphous: complete (egg, larva, pupa, adult stages)

Period of Primary Occurrence: spring

- Overwintered eggs hatch in spring, when oaks are flushing

## Plants Affected

- Oaks are their preferred host, but wind-blown caterpillars will defoliate small trees and shrubs

## Identifying Characteristics of Insect Pest

### LARVAE / EGG STAGE

- Females lay masses of eggs on the surface of old cocoons
- Unique to this species are the orange-colored spots along the back and sides
- Cocoons on houses, boats, picnic tables and other outdoor articles can be hard to remove

### ADULT STAGE

- Caterpillars in this species are generally 1 – 1½" long with dark hairy bodies and a red head, 2 black 'hair pencils' project forward like antennae, 4 dense tufts of hair (tussocks) on back and fluffy tuft projecting to the rear like a tail
- Females are wingless

## Best Management Practices (BMP)

### NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Feeding by caterpillars normally has little impact on oaks and pesticide treatment is usually not warranted

### CHEMICAL CONTROL

- Abundant populations maybe treated with a Bt based insecticide applied to the foliage of host trees and threatened shrubbery before the caterpillars mature and begin disbursing (March through April)
- Timing of application is important for control
- Caterpillars can be swept into a pail of soapy water before cocoons are spun



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4

- Cocoons can be removed by slipping tweezers or similar tool between the cocoon and wall
- Wear protective clothing as the caterpillar hairs in the cocoon may irritate skin



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Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. If the information does not agree with current labeling, follow the label instructions. The label is the law.

Always remember to read and heed six of the most important words on the label: "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN"

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