

OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTH (*THAUMETOPOEA PROCESSIONEA*) - LIFE CYCLE



Image 1

Egg Plaques (approx. 3cm long) on twig

This is the most difficult stage to survey for but in the absence of detailed information on typical hatch periods in Great Britain, a search of branches for egg masses during the winter months is recommended. May be found January to early May and then August to December.



Image 2

Egg plaques (Close up shot)
This egg plaque is approximately 2cm (20mm) long.



Image 3

1st Instar larvae

Larvae are very small (around 2mm long) when they hatch in April/May

UGA2101010



Image 4

2nd Instar larvae (also known as L2)

Larvae are still less than 1cm long by the time they reach the third stage (L3). May be found mid April through to mid May.



Image 5

3rd Instar larvae (L3) feeding on oak leaves

May be found during the month of May.



Image 6

Feeding damage is quite distinctive and noticeable as the larvae tend to leave the leaves skeletonised with the main veins remaining.

Larvae can remain hidden in and around the soil at the base of the tree, and larval nests can be placed on the outside of the pots or on adjacent packaging material.

Therefore, any tree with defoliation but no larvae should be treated with suspicion and the soil, pot and adjacent material checked carefully.



Image 7

4th Instar larvae (also known as L4)

Fourth stage and older larvae also remain mainly within their nests during the day where they are protected from chemical sprays. May be found in mid May through to mid June.



Image 8

L4 transition to L5

Larvae spin bigger silken nests and spend more time within these nests during the day as they grow.



Image 9

L5 in procession

(May to beginning of July)



Image 10

Silk trail and nest



Image 11

L6 creating nest

June to mid July



Image 12

Pupal nest dislodged from mature tree

Eventually, the larvae moult (late June to early August) to the pupal stage, again within the nest.



Image 13

Rear view of un-emerged nest showing pupal chambers



Image 14

Freshly emerged adult moth on nest

Adult moths emerge and fly around the middle of July to early September. Males are strong flyers, the females less so. Both sexes only live for 3 to 4 days as adults.



Image 15

Adult moth

Males can be trapped in traps baited with the female sex attractant pheromone



Image 16

Adult moth

Middle of July to early September

All photographs courtesy of Ralph Parks and Forest Research.

**Produced by -
Forestry Commission
Plant Health Service
231 Corstorphine Road
EDINBURGH
EH12 7AT**

**Tel: 0131-314-6414
Fax: 0131-314-6148
Email: plant.health@forestry.gsi.gov.uk**

Website: www.forestry.gov.uk/planthealth