



CANKERWORMS

FREQUENTLY ASK QUESTIONS

What are the City of Dauphin's plans for cankerworms this year?

The City of Dauphin uses the trained and licensed arborists at Dauphin Recreation Services to service trees located on City-owned, public property. Based on recommendations from a renowned Provincial arborist, Dauphin Recreation Services is currently using a mixture of water and mild soap in a pressure washer to wash the worms out of infected trees. This technique is being applied to the most infested trees first, and as time permits moving on to less affected trees.

Will the City be spraying chemicals on public and/or private trees to combat the cankerworms?

Dauphin Recreation Services currently has no plans to use chemicals, such as Malathion, Bioprotec ECO or BTK Biological Larvacide to spray public or private trees for cankerworms in Dauphin.

Will Dauphin Recreation Services spray trees or shrubs located on my property?

Dauphin Recreation Services, on behalf of the City of Dauphin, will only spray trees located on public property and will NOT spray trees on private property.

What do homeowners and business owners use to apply the mixture of soap and water and how often?

People can spray their trees with the soap and water mixture if they have a power washer; trees should be sprayed twice about 2 or 3 days apart.

Can homeowners or business owners spray trees on their property using one of the chemicals listed above?

Yes. Assuming the proper application techniques are followed, these products can be used on private property trees to control the cankerworm population.

If the cankerworms eat all the leaves on my trees, will this affect the health of the trees going forward?

According to Provincial arborists and forestry experts, trees should be able to withstand this occurrence and remain healthy in future years.

What are cankerworms?

Cankerworms are caterpillars that feed primarily on the leaves of American elms, Manitoba maple and Green ash in May and June. We often call cankerworms loopers, inchworms or measuring worms. Cankerworms spin down from trees on silken webs.

Is there more than one type of cankerworm?

Dauphin has two types of cankerworms, the fall cankerworm (*Alsophila pometaria* Harris) and the spring cankerworm (*Paleacrita vernata* Peck). Both look similar and cause damage in the spring when the leaves come out.

What do cankerworms look like?



Spring cankerworm

Both the spring and fall cankerworm are about 2.5 cm long when fully grown. They range in color from light green to brownish green with a dark stripe down the back.



Fall cankerworm

What is the life cycle of a cankerworm?

The fall cankerworm adult, which is a moth, lays its eggs on trees before winter. It usually does this after the first severe autumn frost. The eggs hatch into cankerworm larvae in the spring. The spring cankerworm adult, also a moth, lays its eggs on trees in the early spring. It lays its eggs after the first major spring thaw.

What does cankerworm damage look like?



Cankerworm damage

Small holes in the new leaves are often the first sign of damage. As the cankerworm larvae eat, the holes become larger until only the leaf veins remain. During high populations, cankerworms can completely strip trees.

Will my trees be damaged?

Most trees grow back their leaves by early July. However, their growth is slower and they are less able to fight potential new diseases and other insect attacks.

How can I control cankerworms?

Adult control

The best way you can control adult cankerworms is to band your trees before larval cankerworms become a problem. Banding your trees with Tanglefoot is an environmentally acceptable way to keep adult cankerworms from climbing the tree to lay eggs. You should band your trees by mid-March to control the spring cankerworm and by mid-September (or before the first hard frost) to control the fall cankerworm. Encourage your neighbours to also band their trees because cankerworms can travel on their silken threads as larvae.

An excellent resource on banding trees is the [Coalition to Save The Elms](#), a non profit organization. If you require assistance in having your trees banded, contact the Coalition at 204-775-6642 or visit their [Coalition to Save The Elms](#) website.

Larval control

A tree is normally very tolerant of some defoliation and control efforts are unnecessary when only a few larval cankerworms are present. However, at times when the cankerworm populations are high, it may be necessary to control them with the use of biological products or chemical pesticides. Biological products like [Bioprotec® ECO](#) and [Safer's BTK™ Biological Larvicide](#) contain the active ingredient *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (*Btk*) to control cankerworm larva. [Malathion®](#) formulations are a chemical alternative used to control cankerworms. These products can be found at most local hardware stores. All Pest Control products purchased and used must be registered with Health Canada and contain a Pest Control Product (P.C.P. or PCP) Number on their label. Once the cankerworms are hanging on their silken threads, contact chemical control is the only possible alternative. Whenever you use a pesticide, always follow label directions.