



Earley Town Council Guidance- Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

The Oak Processionary Moth

The caterpillars of the OPM infest oak trees, eating the leaves, weakening the tree, and leaving it vulnerable to other threats. OPM nests and caterpillars are also a hazard to human and animal health.

The South East of England (including Earley) is an established area and landowners are responsible for the management of OPM on their land.

Hazards

- Their tiny hairs which can be blown in the wind can cause itchy rashes, eye and throat irritations and occasionally breathing difficulties in both people and animals.
- In rare cases the hairs may cause an allergic reaction. You can become sensitised by repeated exposure to the hairs, worsening your symptoms.
- The greatest risk period is June to August, but nests should always be avoided as they can contain thousands of shed hairs.

How to Identify OPM

They live almost exclusively in Oak trees and are found clustered together moving in nose-to-tail processions in the tree or on the ground.

They build white silken webbing trails and nests, usually dome or teardrop shaped on Oak trunks and branches (not leaves) these nests soon become discoloured.



OPM Caterpillars



OPM Nest

If you see nests or caterpillars

- **Do not come into contact with caterpillars or nests.**
- Take a photo and note the location.
- Report it:
 - Online: treealert.forestryresearch.gov.uk
 - Email: opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk
 - Phone 0300 067 4442

Carrying out tree works on Oak

- **Thoroughly check all oak material thoroughly before handling/ working with it**
- Thoroughly chip all small material
- **Retain all material on site wherever possible.**
- Follow specified guidelines for moving or disposal of materials.
- PPE to be worn at all times when working with infested material.

Removal

Removal or treatment needs to be carried out by a licensed professional, **DO NOT try removing nests or caterpillars**, instead you should report it to the Operations Manager or Senior Park Ranger who will make the arrangements.

If you have been in contact with OPM hairs

- See a pharmacist if you need relief from skin or eye irritation following contact.
- See a GP or NHS 111 if you have a serious allergic reaction.
- See a vet if a pet has been affected.

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This document has been shared with all outside staff.