

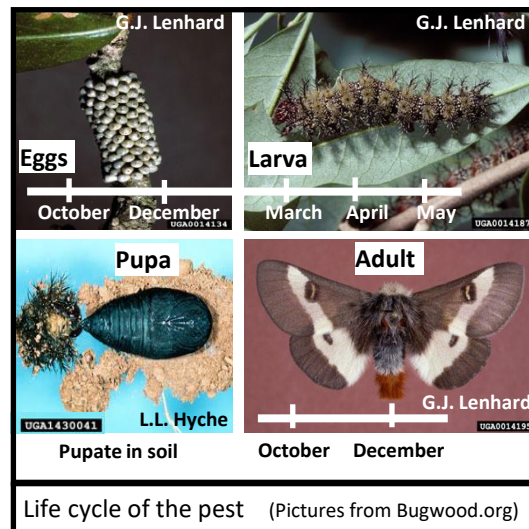
URBAN TREE PESTS IN LOUISIANA

Buck moth

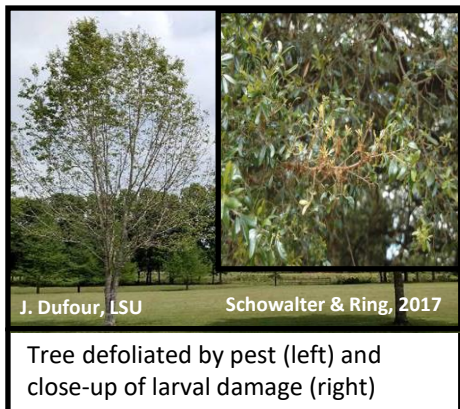


PEST IDENTIFICATION

- Scientific name: *Hemileuca maia*
- Origin: Eastern USA
- Larva has multi-branched spines with venom causing severe rash to people; can reach 2.5 inches in size
- Adult moths are black and white with red at tip of abdomen (males); 2-3 inches in size (do not feed)
- It completes one generation per year
- Species of threatened status in northern states due to its decline (important food source for wildlife)

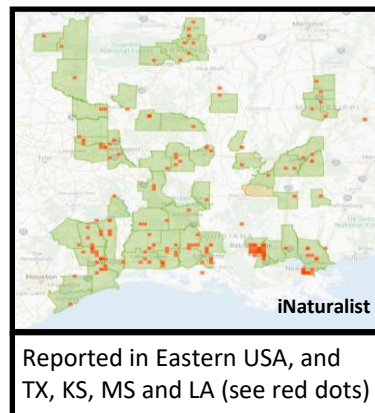


DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE



- Medical concern due to painful larval stings
- Feeds on oaks (prefer hosts), black cherry, willow trees, roses
- Periodic defoliator but not considered major pest
- Signs: egg masses and groups of larvae on tree, defoliation

STATE DISTRIBUTION



MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Prevention:

- Medical concern: Use long-sleeves, gloves, closed shoes when pruning trees (April-June). Wash immediately if skin touches larva
- Monitor: Visual inspection on trees; pheromone traps for adults

Treatments: (follow product label for rates, timing, and safety)

- Management is rarely needed, oaks often recover from defoliation
- Use non-toxic biopesticides such as Bt spray (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) for small larvae or contact insecticide Sevin® (March-May)

Bill Klein, USDA Forest Service



Natural control: Some flies and wasps attack the pest. Picture shows cocoons from beneficial wasps

(Picture from Bugwood.org)

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