

Pine processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea pityocampa*)

Pine processionary moth (PPM) affects most species of pine, including the native Scots pine, and occasionally other conifers. Caterpillars feed on pine needles, leaving trees weakened and vulnerable to other pests, diseases, and environmental events such as drought.

Caterpillars:

- hairy, with an orange/brown body, and blue bands down the length of the body;
- can be seen moving in single-file procession on the ground or on pine trunks, although they tend to stay in their nests during the daytime.

Moths:

- cream forewings with brown markings and white hindwings, which can be difficult to distinguish from other species;
- emerge and fly from around May to July.

PPM are a hazard to human health. Caterpillar hairs can cause painful skin, eye and throat irritation, rashes, and in rare cases, allergic reactions. **Do not touch or remove caterpillars or nests yourself.**

Look out for white, silken nests up to the size of a football, which then turn brown and degrade. Nests are most easily seen in winter and early spring.

If you suspect it, report it by visiting <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/> or use the QR code.



A procession of PPM caterpillars. Credit: Ilya Mityishev (EPPO)



Nest in foliage/branches. Credit: D.D. Cadahia



Caterpillar damage to foliage. Credit: John Ghent (Bugwood.org)