

KNOCK OUT BROWNTAIL

Help Reduce the Itch and Save Your Skin!



KNOCK OUT BROWNTAIL with the Four **Rs** plus two more tips!

1. **Recognize** webs during the **winter season** when they are easiest to see.
 2. **Remove** winter webs with hand snips or an extendable pole pruner **before April**. Destroy webs by soaking them in soapy water or burn them safely and legally.
 3. **Recruit** professional help to treat or remove webs you can't reach in areas of high human use such as your dooryard.
 4. **Reach Out** and let your neighbors and town officials know if you find browntail caterpillars or webs in your neighborhood.
- Check for and remove caterpillars from your car in **May and June** before leaving your parking spot to prevent the spread of these pests.
 - Turn off outdoor lights during peak moth activity in **July** to reduce the moth attraction to your property. Yellow-colored lighting may also limit moth attraction.

How can I protect myself from the toxic hairs?

- Follow the Four **Rs** that knock out browntail moths!
- If you can't avoid areas with lots of browntail caterpillar activity, protect your eyes, skin, and airway when:
 - Mowing, raking, weed-whacking, leaf-blowing or other activities that may stir up toxic hairs.
 - Removing webs in winter to prevent contact with previous seasons' hairs.
- Take a cool shower after working in infested areas to wash away irritating hairs.
- Hose down caterpillars on hard surfaces with water and remove using a wet-dry vacuum with a HEPA filter and some soapy water in the bottom.

Help! I'm already itchy from the toxic hairs!

- Take a cool bath with baking soda or an oatmeal solution.
- Apply hydrocortisone cream or other calming lotions to itchy areas.
- Use OTC allergy products for mild respiratory symptoms.
- Consult your doctor if you develop a severe reaction. If you have difficulty breathing, swelling of the mouth, tongue, or throat, call 911.



Actual size in June



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For More Information:

Dial: 211 or 866-811-5695
Text: Zip Code to 898-211
Email: info@211maine.org

Browntail Moth



Why are they a problem?

Browntail caterpillars (*Euproctis chrysorrhoea*) have tiny toxic hairs that readily break off of their bodies and can **stay toxic in the environment for up to three years**. In sensitive individuals, these hairs can cause **skin irritation** similar to poison ivy and in some cases **difficulty breathing and other symptoms**.

Browntail moth caterpillars also feed on the leaves of broad-leaved trees and shrubs. **Repeated seasons of feeding can lead to tree damage**. Every year since 1994, Maine has noted pockets of high populations of this non-native pest and damage amounting to at least 400 acres. In 2015, browntail moth populations entered an outbreak phase, defoliating tens of thousands of acres annually. We cannot eradicate browntail moths, instead, management should focus on reducing impacts to people through targeted reduction of their populations.

Stay Updated on Browntail Moth:
maine.gov/dacf/knockoutbtm

Browntail Moth



⚠ CAUTION!

Caterpillar hairs may cause skin rash or respiratory irritation

- ✓ Dark brown and hairy
- ✓ Two **red spots** on back with broken white stripes
- ✓ Caterpillars are active from mid-April until early October

Reach Out About Browntail Winter Webs:

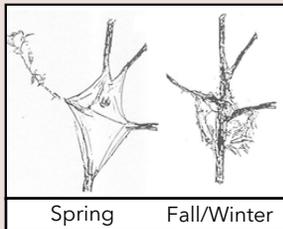
Let your neighbors and town officials know about browntail webs or caterpillars you find. The more people that respond to the problem, the better the results of web and caterpillar removal.



Mistaken for Browntail Webs:

Eastern tent caterpillars:

Build large tents on inner branch crotches of apple, cherry, and other fruit trees in the spring.



Fall webworm:

Build large tents that are loosely attached to inner branch crotches of ash, and other hardwoods in late summer.

Source: Maine Forest Service

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Recognize Browntail Winter Webs:



Tips of small branches

Found on the **branch tips** (not crotch) of host trees which most often include: red oak, apple, cherry, crabapple, elm, birch, poplar, shadbush and rugosa rose.



Palm-sized webs

Webs are typically 2-5 inches long and consist of a leaf or a few leaves in a tree or shrub. These webs contain 25 to 400 caterpillars during the winter.



White silk

Check for webs on sunny days! You can stand with your back to the sun and the white silk in the webs will reflect back at you.

Source: Maine Forest Service

Recruit Professionals When You Can't Remove Webs:

- Licensed professional arborists offer web removal for larger trees and shrubs.
- Some FAA-certified commercial remote pilots offer web clipping using unmanned aerial vehicles.
- In trees where the caterpillars' hairs cause a nuisance and where it is not practical to remove the webs, licensed pesticide applicators may be able to use insecticides in early spring to manage the caterpillars.

We strongly recommend recruiting a licensed pesticide applicator if you plan to use insecticides. If you decide to do it yourself, choose a product that is registered for use in Maine, labeled for the site of application, and effective against caterpillars. Apply consistent with the label so it **will take effect before the end of May.**

Remove Browntail Winter Webs:

Wear gloves and use an extendable pole pruner or hand snips to **cut out winter webs within reach** from the ground. Take precautions during removal to avoid contact with hazards, such as powerlines, and exposure to the toxic hairs.

After removal:



OR



Place webs into a large bucket filled with soapy water for several days, then dispose of webs in the trash.

Obtain a free burn permit from the State of Maine and destroy webs by burning them in a contained fire.