

FACT SHEET



NOT PRESENT IN AUSTRALIA – CALL 1800 084 881

NUN MOTH - *Lymantria monacha*

Description

Medium-sized moths with a wingspan of 35-55 mm and widespread in Europe and Asia.

The forewings of both sexes are white with wavy dark bands. Wing colour can vary greatly with white and dark forms present. Eggs are dark grey and are laid in masses of 20 to 100 in bark crevices or under bark scales or lichen.

Larvae are up to 35 mm long with a grey-yellow body and with tufts of hair of various lengths along the sides of the body. The first four abdominal segments have a dorsal pair of bluish spots; the sixth and seventh segments have dorsal orange lumps. The head is pale brown with dense black markings.

Affected tree species

Affects conifers such as Pine (*Pinus*), Spruce (*Picea*), Fir (*Abies*) and Larch (*Larix*). Can also affect a wide range of commonly planted broad-leaved urban tree species such as Oak (*Quercus*), Maple (*Acer*), Ash (*Fraxinus*), Birch (*Betula*), Apple (*Malus*) and other fruit trees.

Symptoms

Defoliation of leaves or needles. Complete defoliation of stands is observed during outbreaks.

Part of the tree affected

Tree crown - Leaves of both broadleaved and conifer tree species are affected.

Age of trees affected

Outbreaks of Nun moth are driven more by the prevalence of susceptible species in the landscape than by tree age. Infestations appear to be more frequent on poor sites.



Pines defoliated by Nun Moth larvae. Stanislaw Kinelski bugwood.org



Larva, Petr Kapitola, bugwood.org.

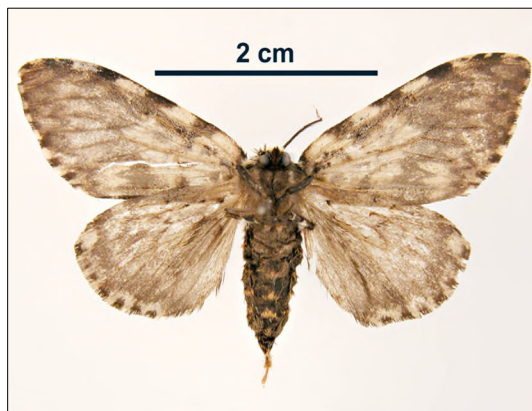


C: Pupa on bark [Creative Commons](https://www.flickr.com/photos/creativecommons/)

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Nun Moth, view from above, [PADIL](#)



Nun Moth, darker variation, view from above, Stanislaw Kinelski [bugwood.org](#)

MyPestGuide Trees

For accessible information on tree pests in Australia use *MyPestGuide Trees* on your browser or mobile platform:

WEB



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Time most likely to be seen

The most likely stages to be observed are the larvae in spring/summer. Eggs hatch in spring and caterpillars develop through to pupation in 40-80 days. Pupation occurs on tree trunks or in crowns, or occasionally on surrounding vegetation cover. Flights by adult moths occur from mid-summer to early autumn.

What can it be confused with

There are several other hairy caterpillars, native and exotic, that can resemble Nun moth larvae, including some native species of *Lymantria*.

Any suspect moths or larvae should be reported.

Prevention and control

Strict import conditions and border controls.

Use of pheromone-based lures for early detection in areas at high-risk of accidental introduction.

Most common control method involves aerial or ground-based application of biological pesticides containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). These bacteria specifically target the larval stages.

Further Information

Nun moth (*Lymantria monacha*), bugwood wiki. wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:Atlas/Lymantria_monacha

Pests and Diseases Image Library (PaDIL) Nun moth *Lymantria monacha* (Linnaeus)(Lepidoptera: Lymantriidae). www.padil.gov.au/pests-and-diseases/pest/main/136274

Biological control of the nun moth, *Lymantria monacha*: different formulations of *Bacillus thuringiensis* for large-scale applications. <https://doi.org/10.1093/forestry/cpaf073>

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Protecting Australia's Trees