

*Black Lake Property Owners' Association*

# 2021 Gypsy Moth Survey

## Short Summary of Results

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**Background:** The BLPOA Directors decided to conduct a survey of owners/members on their experiences in 2021 with the caterpillars formerly known as Gypsy Moth caterpillars and formally known as 'Lymantria Dispar'.

These are a non-native species (albeit one that has been in North America for a century and a half!) that goes through natural cycles, the peak of which can involve considerable tree canopy defoliation. Their cycle uptick at Black Lake started in 2020 and, as predicted, they were omnipresent in 2021.

The survey was sent out in the early July and open until the end of July. In the end there were 61 responses to the survey, out of over 180 email recipients at the time of the mail-out (remember, you must sign up for these emails here: <http://blacklakeassociation.ca/home/contact-us/manage-your-subscriptions/>).

The results are presented in a graphical format here: <https://forms.office.com/r/X2mWm0g91M>

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### **Awareness of the Risks for 2021**

**A considerable majority of respondents (70%) were aware that 2021 could be a bad year for the caterpillars.** The source of awareness was relatively evenly split amongst lake association info, media coverage and the 2020 experience.

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### **Exposure Risks**

**Respondents had considerable exposure to the caterpillars from having lots of an acre or more, with considerable forest canopy of mixed or largely deciduous trees.** Only about a quarter of respondents had well under an acre of property and over a third had well over an acre or more. Only 11 per cent had one quarter or less tree canopy with one quarter having a full tree canopy. Under 7 per cent had a mostly coniferous canopy (less of a target for the caterpillars), with almost a third having a largely deciduous canopy and the majority mixed.

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### **Early Preparation for the Caterpillars**

**Slightly over half did some late 2020 or spring 2021 preparation to reduce the effects of the caterpillars.** Preparation was dominated by squishing the caterpillars, scraping egg masses, and putting inverted tape on tree trunks. About 15 per cent of total respondents bought their own BTK spray and half that number tried to but found stores were out of stock. About 16 per cent of total respondents contacted an aerial spraying service (the rest did not want spraying or did not think they needed it) but only half were on time to book the commercial spraying.

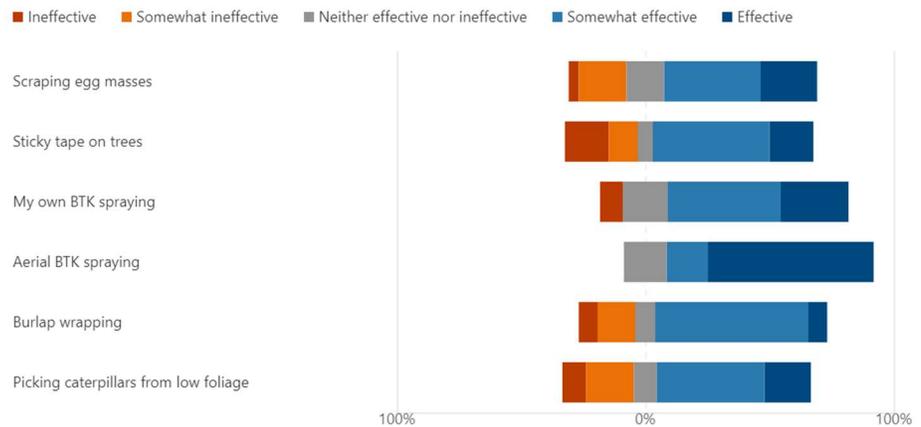
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**Effectiveness of Actions Taken**

**Of the listed actions (scraping, sticky tape, personal or commercial BTLK spraying, burlap wrapping and picking), all were thought to be more effective than not, but none were uniformly seen as effective. Sticky tape was seen by many as ineffective, although still effective by more. This likely depended on getting the tape on early enough while the caterpillars were teensy. A lot also saw picking as ineffective, perhaps just due to how many could not be picked.**

12. How effective do you think what you did was? Remember, these solutions are to reduce damage not eliminate the problem.

[More Details](#)



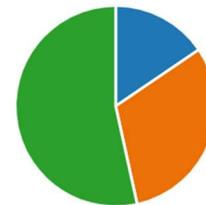
That said, control is about reducing damage not eliminating it.

**Extent of Infestation**

**Everyone had caterpillars!** Most in moderate and over half said they were ‘everywhere’.

14. How extensive were they?

[More Details](#)



**Late June Die-off and Moths**

**There is some good news: the late June rains would have helped spread a naturally occurring fungus in the caterpillar population and reduced their numbers.** Almost two thirds reported seeing dying caterpillars and close to half reported seeing ‘few’ of the moths.

**Damage to the Most Vulnerable Trees**

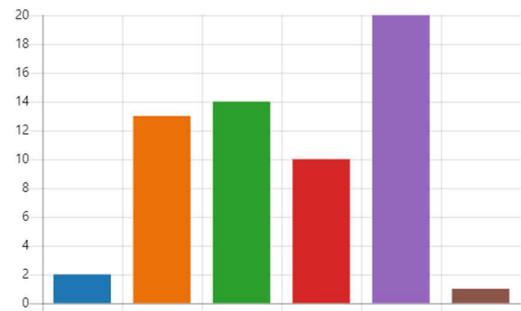
**The most vulnerable trees were severely damaged.** These are oak, poplar, birch, basswood, and fruit trees.

Few experienced little damage, more experienced holes in leaves, but many experienced extensive or even complete defoliation of these vulnerable trees.

17. What damage did you see to trees that are the favourite choice of gypsy moths? That is oak, poplar, birch, basswood and fruit trees.

[More Details](#)

● None	2
● Some holes, but with leaves st...	13
● Some defoliation, but less tha...	14
● Fifty per cent to two thirds def...	10
● Almost or complete defoliation	20
● I don't have oak trees	1



**Damage to Other Deciduous Trees**

**Other deciduous trees were clearly having foliage eaten but with less than half defoliation.** Half defoliation or more is when the trees can be seriously stressed, especially should it occur for two or more consecutive years.

**Damage to Coniferous Trees**

**There was also a lot of needle loss for coniferous trees.** This is worrisome as coniferous trees cannot replace their needles.

**Tree Survival Prospects**

**About a third thought there was a risk their trees would not survive through 2022.** Most trees, other than very old trees, can survive significant or complete defoliation but less so for two consecutive years.

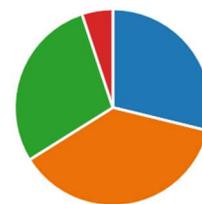
**Property Enjoyment and Health**

**Most respondents had their enjoyment of their property adversely affected.** Anecdotes include people being unable to sit outside (that was not pepper in the glass of Chardonnay!).

23. How did they affect your enjoyment of your property?

[More Details](#)

● Little	17
● Moderately, as in we had to sq...	22
● Extremely, as in they and their ...	17
● Other	3



Over a quarter even managed to get rashes from the hairs on the caterpillars, which can become airborne.

**Preparation for 2022 Caterpillar Cycle**

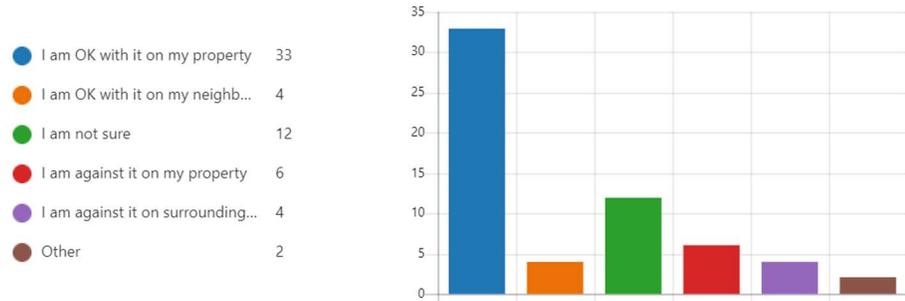
**Most respondents will be doing preparatory work to deal with the caterpillars in their 2022 cycle.** About two thirds will be scraping eggs masses and a lot will make sure they have their own BTK or would like to contract for aerial spraying. Preparatory work will, however, be complicated as some must be done before the half of respondents who are seasonal will likely come to the lake. The first warm days are coming earlier and earlier, long before Victoria Day weekends.

**Interest in 2022 BTK Spraying**

**A lot of respondents are interested in BTK spraying for 2022. But there are enough who oppose it that it would still have to be lot-by-lot.**

25. What are your thoughts about spraying for the caterpillars next year? The spray is BTK, a naturally occurring (and not live) bacteria which will kill the caterpillars when they ingest leaves sprayed with it. It is sprayed when these caterpillars are active and before others, such as those for Monarch Butterflies, are active.

[More Details](#)



26. Would you be interested in paying for aerial spraying of BTK on your lot for the caterpillars next year? The pricing for 2020 was several hundred dollars per property, which covered two sprayings.

[More Details](#)



Almost a quarter would be willing to help organizing spraying for 2022, if available.

**Other Comments**

**People were obviously quite concerned about their enjoyment of their property and the risks to their foliage. Yet there were comments to the effect that this is a cycle, and we should not over-react but rather let nature take its course.**

The comments were (quoted, but edited for punctuation and spelling):  
*Most people were asleep, did not see what was coming, then knee jerk re-action, a bit too late to help.*

*Great Job. Thanks*

*Would the second spraying also be before the other caterpillars hatch? That's my worry. I'd also like to know how effective it was on the properties that did have spraying done this year.*

*As a biologist I recognize his is a natural cycle and will subside. We do not need to step in every time something in nature displeases us.*

*Did not know about BTK.*

*Haven't seen the tree frogs this year. Were they affected by the spraying? I have a diagnosis which makes me concerned about aerial spraying, no matter how "organic".*

*We also should be using the male moth traps*

*We worked hard right from the start. Squishing or knocking them off into a water and soap solution, spraying daily when we were there with a mixture of soapy water and garlic. As stated in survey we also used sticky tape and burlap on the trees. Also during that time, we would spray with BTK. We sprayed our trees about three times. Once the moths started showing up we purchased two traps and made three of our own, using large bottles with water and soap in the bottom along with female Lure bought from our local nursery at home. Traps are working well!*

*Question #11, restrictions on neighbouring properties did not permit us to spray, otherwise we would have paid. Question #18, Poplar and Basswood trees were predominately affected by caterpillars on our lot, with Maples, Birch, and Oaks somewhat affected this year. Question #25, should have permitted multiple answers, as we would have been okay to spray on ours and if neighbours wanted to do so too.*

*Thanks for another great survey!*

*Trees here were already partially defoliated in previous years by forest tent caterpillars. Drought is also killing trees. It is fortunate that we have had rain lately which will help trees recover. The oak trees are getting some new leaves now but will have to set buds again for next year.*

*Additionally, our birch, apple and basswood trees were stripped*

*Heard that Carleton place was giving free moth traps from city hall*

*I am willing to volunteer some time for #27 but limited due to Tax season (I'm in accounting). I worked very hard to save my little oak tree with success. I fear that next year they may decide Maple is a good meal and then I'm in BIG trouble. Willing to get a quote from Zimmer.*

*Thank you BLPOA for what you do. I hope there can be a collective effort on spraying and I'm sorry I don't have time to help but will happily pay my share :)*

*We are concerned about the environmental impact of spraying overall and the impact on the lake water.*

*In fact, these caterpillars were far less problematic than the forest tent caterpillars of 3-4 years ago. I killed hundreds/day on my deck and railings and they ate much more of the leaves*

*It's a natural, multi year cycle that will sort itself out with time. Let's be patient.*

*It was difficult to answer many of the questions on the actual infestation due to our inability to be at our cottage since 2019 due to the border closures.*

*Would like to know if spraying done on the lake was very effective or not?*

*Thanks for taking this initiative*

*This is a natural occurrence.... no point in throwing away money at the inevitable.*

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