

Oak Processionary Moths

The oak processionary moth (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) is a pest that lives on oak trees and poses a risk to human and animal health.

Health risk

The caterpillar of this moth emerges in April every year and develops thousands of urticating (irritating) hairs, which can cause skin rashes, sore throats, breathing difficulties and eye problems if you or your pet comes into contact with them.

What to do if you see or touch them

If you see any oak processionary nests or caterpillars (OPM) you should **report them immediately**.

- If they are on a privately owned oak tree, report them to the Forestry Commission using the [Tree Alert online pest reporting form](#). If you cannot use Tree Alert, you may report them by telephone on 0300 067 442 or by email at opm@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.
- If they are on a council-owned tree, report it to the council's parks department on 020 7364 5000 or at parks@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

If you think you may have been exposed and have an itchy skin rash and/or conjunctivitis or other symptoms see a pharmacist to relieve the symptoms, or, if you have a more serious allergic reaction, contact your GP or call NHS Direct on 111. The call is free from any phone.

Similarly consult a vet if your pet has a serious reaction. (It is important to restrain pets from approaching nests or caterpillars).

Advice for contractors

Regulations are in place which affects how contractors working with Oak trees should be handling material within the Oak Processionary Moth affected areas.

More

Find out more about the oak processionary moth on the [Forestry Commission website](#).

