

Box Tree Moth



Information from Hannah Fraser, Entomologist for Horticulture Crops with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

We are supporting a survey for box tree moth (*Cydalima perspectalis*).

Native to east Asia, the box tree moth (BTM) was detected in Toronto in 2018. Surveys conducted from 2019-2021 indicate the pest is spreading outside of the GTA into the Niagara region and as far west as Cambridge in the west. Boxwood is an important nursery crop and ornamental landscape specimens can be found throughout gardens and parks across North America, making the presence of BTM in Ontario a serious concern.

Box tree moth is a boxwood (*Buxus* spp.) specialist. Larvae feed mainly on the leaves, and occasionally on the bark, of boxwood. Left unmanaged, repeated defoliation over multiple years can kill the plant. Within intervention, BTM is a manageable pest. Although the nursery industry has developed a management plan to limit the spread of BTM, the adults are strong flyers who can disperse locally once established.

We are hoping to engage Citizen Scientists who are interested in tracking BTM in Ontario in order to gain a better understanding of the presence and impact in gardens and landscape plants. The Ontario BTM team (OMAFRA, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, University of Toronto, University of Guelph, and the nursery and landscape industry) has worked closely with Citizen Scientists to track the spread of BTM in past years with much success.

However, we don't have cooperators in all regions of Ontario where this pest is likely to occur for this upcoming season. We are hoping to connect with horticulturalists / avid gardeners in southwestern (west of Guelph), central (outside of the GTHA), and eastern Ontario who would be willing to help us. What is the best way to reach out to Ontario Horticultural Association members in these regions? Is there a central system, or would we need to contact individual district societies?

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WHAT'S Required:

Cooperators would be given a trap kit. They would need to:

- set up a pheromone trap in or near boxwood in May.
NOTE: Traps only catch males, so they will not “bring in” females to the boxwood plants.
- check it weekly and email trap counts to the coordinator (the Canadian Food Inspection Agency).
- change the lure in August.
- take down the trap at the end of September.

Here are some links to resources / information about this pest (including YouTube videos):

<https://onnurserycrops.com/2021/05/06/box-tree-moth-larvae-are-starting-to-feed-in-toronto/>

<https://landscapeontario.com/box-tree-moth-look-for-these-signs-this-spring>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFyqWK9O1NI>

Thank you for your time!

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