

Programme Update 1: 29 March 2019

Welcome to the first Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) programme update for 2019. These newsletters will be published at intervals throughout the spring and summer control season. They will cover key stages such as caterpillar emergence, as well as information on progress and surveillance until the final results for the year are known. Feel free to forward this update to anyone who might be interested.

The year in prospect

The weather has been a lot milder this year than last, when we were hit by the 'Beast from the East'. Soon there will be signs of oak trees breaking bud and, with that, reports of OPM caterpillars emerging.

Thanks again to the Royal Parks for monitoring OPM egg plaques – I expect soon we will receive an update saying caterpillars have emerged.

OPM first appeared on 16th April in 2018, but this year it looks like it will be earlier. The OPM control team is preparing, and part of this process is to issue statutory plant health notices to affected tree owners and managers. More than 1000 have been sent, setting out what needs to be done. Control will most likely start during the third week of April (depending on when the oak leaves emerge), and will continue through most of May. Your co-operation with the control programme is much appreciated.

We will be starting a visual survey in June, based in areas where we have limited knowledge of where OPM is currently. This work is being done in conjunction with modellers at Cambridge University in order to utilise our resources to the best of our ability. We still encourage you to report all OPM sightings to us via the on-line portal Tree Alert at www.forestresearch.gov.uk/treealert. Alternatively you can send in your reports to the email address at the end of this update, but first please see the guidance on email reporting under 'Report a sighting' on [our web pages](#).

Training events

We are planning to carry out three OPM awareness events in Richmond Park from Tuesday 28th to Thursday 30th May. Tea and coffee are provided, but please bring a packed lunch and suitable outdoor clothing. Places are limited to 25 people each day, so email us at opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk if you'd like to book a place.

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New email and web pages

Please note that we have a new email address, opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk, and new web pages at www.forestresearch.gov.uk/opm. Please therefore update any links to our material on your organisations' own websites. The web information is updated frequently.

Please help us to help you...

Help us provide comprehensive, up-to-date OPM reports outside of Defra/FC work by sending information on your OPM activity to opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk.

New team member

We are pleased to welcome Roberta (Bobbi) Dawkins to the OPM programme team. Bobbi will be starting towards the end of April, and will mainly deal with enquiries.

And finally...

Thanks in advance to everyone who will be contributing time, skills and resources to this year's programme. OPM can only be effectively tackled with strong partnership working, so your contributions are always greatly appreciated.

To stay up to date with OPM and other tree pests and diseases, you can also sign up to receive our free e-newsletter [Tree Health News](#). Previous editions are available [on line](#).

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