FACT SHEET

FOREST WATCH AUSTRALIA

EXOTIC PEST – CALL THE EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE IF SUSPECTED

Nun moth

Description

Nun moths *(Lymantria monacha)* are medium-sized moths with a wingspan of 35–55 mm. The forewings of both sexes are white with wavy dark bands. Wing colour can vary greatly with white and dark forms being present. Nun moths are widespread in Europe and Asia.

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.

Adult female (L) and male (R)

Eggs under bark scales

Primary hosts

Hosts include a wide range of broad-leaved trees such as Oak *(Quercus)*, Maple *(Acer)*, Ash *(Fraxinus)*, Birch *(Betula)*, Apple *(Malus)*, other fruit trees, and conifers such as Pine *(Pinus)*, Spruce *(Picea)*, Fir *(Abies)* and Larch *(Larix)*.

Outbreaks of the Nun moth are often observed in Scots pine *(Pinus sylvestris)* and Norway spruce *(Picea abies)* stands in central Europe.

Symptoms

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

What it can be confused with

The most likely stages to be observed in a plantation are the larvae. There are a number of other hairy lepidopteran caterpillars, native and exotic, that can resemble Nun moth larvae, including some native *Lymantria* species. Larvae need to be reared through to adult moths to enable specialist diagnosis. Any suspect moths or larvae should be reported.

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Plant part affected

Leaves of both broadleaved and conifer tree species are affected.

Age of plant

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 in monocultures growing on poor sites.

Time of year pest is most likely to be seen

In the northern hemisphere, 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.

For further information

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

Michigan State University's invasive species factsheets: Nun moth *Lymantria monacha.* Available from www.ipm.msu.edu/uploads/files/Forecasting_invasion_risks/nunMoth.pdf

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

Larval form of Nun moth

Defoliation by Nun moth larvae on Scots Pine *(Pinus sylvestris)*

If you see anything unusual, call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline

EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881

PHA24-003E