



TRADER NOTICE No. 4 OF 2023

13th June 2023

To: All professional operators and importers of plants and plant products

Subject: Finding of *Thaumetopoea processionea* (Oak Processionary Moth) in Ireland.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have confirmed a finding of *Thaumetopoea processionea*, commonly known as the Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) in Ireland. Oak Processionary Moth caterpillars were found on four Oak trees in a Dublin housing estate. The nests and four trees have been destroyed.

Ireland has a Protected Zone status under the EU Plant Health legislation for this pest. A Protected Zone is an area of the EU which is free from a harmful organism. DAFM have commenced an investigation into this infestation. Surveying for this pest around the infected site has commenced and an intensive survey campaign using trapping methods and visual examinations of oak trees will continue over the coming weeks and months.

The caterpillars (larvae) of this moth are mainly associated with feeding on the foliage of Oak (*Quercus*) tree species. However, when there are limited oak trees available, larvae have been observed to feed on other tree species (Acacia, Birch, Hornbeam, Hawthorn, Hazel and Beech) but it is uncertain whether they can survive on these species and complete their lifecycle development to adults. The caterpillars (larvae) feed on leaves and can cause severe defoliation leaving trees weakened and open to secondary infections from other pest and diseases.

In addition, this moth also poses a potential risk for human health and animal health, as the body of the caterpillar is adorned with numerous irritating hairs. Contact with the hairs can provoke allergic reactions which manifest as skin rashes, conjunctivitis and respiratory problems such as pharyngitis and asthma.

All Professional Operators with the host trees outlined above are requested to examine these trees for the presence of OPM caterpillars/larvae. Suspected sightings should be notified immediately to DAFM with your contact details and geolocation of the sighting to plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie or by telephone 01-5058885.

Professional Operators should not attempt to move or destroy nests of OPM caterpillars due to the potential human health risk.

Controls for the Importation of Oak are set out in [Trader Notice 9 of 2019](https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/e366e-trader-notices/) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/e366e-trader-notices/>). Pre-Notification of the Importation of all Oak as set out in [Statutory Notice No. 30/2020 - Destructive Insects and Pests Acts 1958 and 1991 \(Pre-Notification\) Order 2020](https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/e366e-trader-notices/) and [Trader Notice 1 of 2020](https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/e366e-trader-notices/) (<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/e366e-trader-notices/>). Pre-notifications should be emailed to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine at the following email address: plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie.

Further information can be found here: [OPM Factsheet](#)

Any questions in relation to this notice may be directed to the following email address:

plantandpests@agriculture.gov.ie.