

caterpillar



male moth



female moth



damage



egg mass



USDA Forest Service

caterpillar



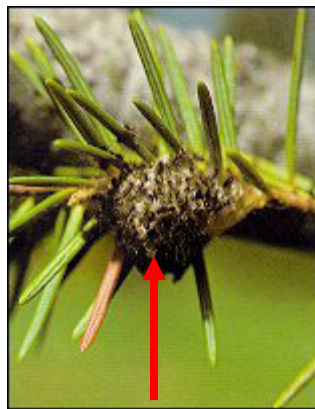
male moth



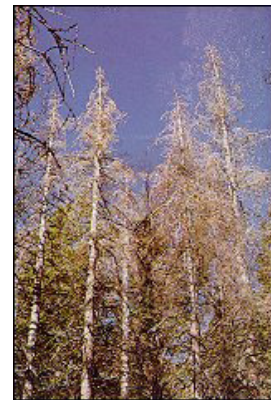
female moth



damage



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USDA Forest Service

Douglas-fir tussock moth
***Orgyia pseudotsugata* (McDunnough)**

This caterpillar is an important defoliator of true firs and Douglas-fir in Western North America. Outbreaks may appear to develop suddenly, but often decline after a year or two. Defoliation kills or top-kills many trees, weakens trees that may eventually be killed by bark beetles, and retards tree growth for several years. The preferred host trees are Douglas-fir, white fir, and grand fir, but larvae will feed on other species of conifers.

The first indication of attack appears in late spring. Small larvae from newly hatched eggs feed on current year's growth, causing it to shrivel and turn brown. By mid-July, larvae are larger and feed on both current and old foliage. Defoliation occurs first in the tops of trees and the outermost portions of branches, and then in the lower crown and innermost area of branches later. By August when larvae are mature, upper crowns of most firs may be completely bare.

The adult male moth is brown to black with feathery antennae and a wingspan of about one inch. The female is virtually wingless but has a large abdomen. She deposits her eggs on top of the cocoon from which she emerged. The eggs overwinter and hatch in May or early June as buds are breaking on the host trees. Larvae may travel on air currents, but eventually they settle and feed. Mature larvae are up to 1¼ inch long and are dark brown to buff-colored with long dark tufts of hair. Larvae mature in late July to late August and pupate for 10 to 18 days in a thin silken cocoon. A single generation occurs each year.

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