

Problem: Yellownecked Caterpillar - *Datana ministra*



Hosts: Very broad host range including apple, pear, cherry, oak, hickory, beech, birch, elm, maple, pear, cherry, oak and walnut.

Description: Yellownecked caterpillars overwinter as pupae. Moths deposit eggs probably in late June and July. Egg masses may contain up to 100 eggs. Eggs within individual masses reportedly hatch simultaneously. Larvae are gregarious and have a prominent yellow to orangish-yellow, neck prothoracic shield, immediately behind the jet black head capsule. After feeding up to six weeks, matured descend trees and enter the ground where they pupate and overwinter. There is one generation per year.

Recommendations: Skeletonization of lower leaf surfaces by small larvae generally goes unnoticed. Larger larvae consume all but leaf petioles. However, defoliation late in the season does not harm the health of the tree. These larvae are gregarious and feed in groups and so pruning off the branch on which they feed may be all the control needed. Insecticides recommended for control or regulation include *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki* (Dipel), spinosad (Conserve, Monterey Garden Insect Spray, Captain Jack's Dead Bug Brew, Natural Guard Spinosad), indoxacarb (Provaunt), chlorantraniliprole (Acelepryn), and pyrethroids such as bifenthrin (Hi-Yield Bug Blaster Bifenthrin, Ortho Insect Killer for Lawn & Landscape), cyfluthrin (BioAdvanced Vegetable & Garden Insect Spray), and cyhalothrin (Spectracide Triazicide). Be sure to apply insecticides (especially Dipel) when caterpillars are small. Yellownecked caterpillars are highly susceptible to many natural enemies such as birds (e.g. robins), predaceous bugs, and parasitic flies.

References:

1. [Yellownecked Caterpillar](#), Pennsylvania State University, Penn State Extension, Tree Fruit Insect Pest
2. [Yellownecked Caterpillar](#), Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Horticulture and Home Pest News

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