

Date: 2022-03-31

Subject: **Spongy (LDD) Moth Burlap Kits**

Contact: Ed Fagan
Acting Director, Parks Maintenance and Forestry
Phone: (905) 874-2913

Report Number: Community Services-2022-377

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Parks Maintenance and Forestry dated March 31, 2022, to the City Council Meeting of April 6, 2022, re **Spongy (LDD) Moth Burlap Kits**, be received; and
2. That staff be directed to make available the free burlap kits to Brampton residents for distribution in May 2022;
3. That staff be directed to work with members of Council on distributing burlap kits to Brampton residents.

Overview:

- **Spongy Moths, also known as Lymantria Dispar Dispar (LDD Moths), are considered a major pest that negatively affects the tree canopy by defoliating trees, making them more susceptible to diseases, and therefore impacting survival rate. The moths have been present in Brampton for more than 10 years.**
- **The City undertakes annual mitigation actions through its Integrated Pest Management program, provides ongoing public education and collaborates with sector partners from the Peel Urban Working Group.**
- **At the March 30th, 2022 Committee of Council meeting, staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of providing free burlap kits to residents in early May and to assess the options of having members of Council distribute the kits. This added measure is meant to allow residents to protect the trees on their private properties, which in turn supports the City's broader mitigation efforts.**

- **Staff assessed the cost and feasibility. Each kit will be approximately \$1.50, and up to 4,000 free burlap kits can be assembled by staff.**
- **Staff will support members of Council with various options on the distribution of kits to Brampton residents.**

Background:

Spongy (LLD) Moths, previously known as “gypsy moth” are a naturalized invasive insect prevalent in North America and are classified as a defoliating (feeding on leaves) species. At the caterpillar stage, they feed on various trees such as oak, birch and maple trees. Within the last two years, their presence has increased within Brampton and neighboring municipalities. This has allowed the species to become a great threat to the tree canopy as they negatively affect the health of the trees, making them vulnerable to diseases. There is an outbreak cycle every seven to ten years and during this period, the population can remain high for two to three years.

To control the population growth and protect vulnerable trees from defoliation, the City’s Integrated Pest Management program has developed a plan for combatting the insect during the spring and summer months. During the months of March and April, Horticulture and Forestry staff conduct egg mass scraping at various parks and streets. Non-toxic bands are installed on selected park and street trees in preventing the insect from feeding on the tree’s leaves. Ground base spraying of trees are conducted in June in areas identified from egg mass counts conducted over the winter months. Trees are sprayed specifically at the crown and leaves, with Foray 48B (Btk), a natural bacteria approved by Health Canada using hydraulic sprayers. Aerial spraying is not a common practice conducted by the City of Brampton, this measure is used in response to a large scale increase of the species population when no other technique is effective.

Residents are notified early spring on the City’s management plan through the public website and various social media. Letters are also sent to residents in highly affected areas outlining useful tips and notification of spraying. In 2021, 72 locations were addressed citywide which consisted of both park and street trees.

The City is a member of the Peel Urban Working Group, which includes the Credit Valley Conservation, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Town of Caledon and City of Mississauga who have been focusing on aerial spraying, education and awareness for their residents. Various cities have implemented a program to provide burlap kits to residents through self-service stations at designated operating facilities and pop-up events. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) have organized a free LDD Moth webinar open to all residents on April 20th, 2022 to provide insight on the moth ecology and management options, and they will also be developing a LDD fact sheet.

At the March 30th, 2022 Committee of Council meeting, staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of providing free burlap kits for distribution in early May and explore options for members of Council to distribution of kits to minimize the impact on staff resources. This is in response to residents' requests for support to protect the trees on private properties, which will have a positive effect on the broader tree canopy of the City of Brampton.

Current Situation:

Staff have preliminarily reviewed and assessed the cost associated with the burlap kits. Each kit, containing a burlap sheet and twine sufficient to wrap a 30cm diameter tree, will cost approximately \$1.50. Kits will be manually prepared by staff and can secure up to 4,000 burlap kits for distribution. The total cost of approximately \$6,000 may be absorbed by the 2022 Parks Maintenance and Forestry operational budget for this pilot. Should Council wish to continue or expand the program in future years or make this a permanent part of the City's Spongy (LDD) Moth mitigation strategy, staff may request a budget amendment from Council to support this initiative.

As for the options for members of Council to distribute the burlap kits, staff may allocate a set number for each office to disperse to their residents at opportunities of their choosing. The upcoming Community Parks Clean Up events in May, for example, may be considered suitable. Staff can also distribute the kits at the Parks Maintenance and Forestry Residential Tree Giveaway event in April and make any remaining kits available for pick up at a designated operational centre.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Funding for the approximate \$6,000 cost for the distribution of up to 4,000 burlap kits to residents is available within the Parks Maintenance and Forestry operating budget.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report supports the following Term of Council Priorities:

- Brampton is a Green City – Focusing on sustainable growth by revitalizing natural spaces and the urban tree canopy
- Brampton is a Healthy and Safe City – Focusing on community safety and healthy lifestyles

Conclusion:

In response to the Council motion on LDD Month Burlap Trap Kits for Residents, staff have assessed the feasibility and recommend making available approximately 4,000 free burlap kits to residents in May 2022. Upon approval, staff will work with members of Council on the distribution of the kits.

Reviewed by:

Ed Fagan, Acting Director
Parks Maintenance & Forestry,
Community Services

Approved by:

Anand Patel, Acting Commissioner
Community Services