



## February is Browntail Awareness Month: Here's What You Can Do

Browntail Moth (BTM) caterpillars have been an ongoing nuisance in Maine; causing tree defoliation and rashes in humans. Reduce your chances of encountering this pest on your property by learning **how to recognize and remove their winter webs from your trees during February, Browntail Moth Awareness month.**

### February Checklist - Reduce Browntail Impacts:

1. **Recognize** browntail winter webs (see photo below). Check the tips of tree branches for palm-sized (2-5 inches long) webs tied to the leaf stem with white silk. Browntail strongly prefer to make their webs in oak, apple, crabapple, cherry, birch, poplar, shadbush, and rose bushes.
2. **Remove** browntail winter webs. Use hand snips or an extendable pole pruner in areas within reach of the ground and away from hazards such as powerlines. Protect your eyes and skin during removal as toxic caterpillars may still be present. After removal, destroy webs:
  - Obtain [burn permit](#) and burn them in a contained fire, or
  - Soak them in a bucket of soapy water for a few days before disposing
3. **Recruit** professional help when you can't remove winter webs. [Licensed arborists](#) or [FAA-certified drone operators](#) can help remove webs during the winter. [Licensed pesticide applicators](#) may be able to use pesticides on trees with browntail during early spring to reduce browntail populations.
4. **Reach Out** if you find browntail in your neighborhood or community. The more neighbors, businesses, and others that work together to respond to browntail, the better the results.



*Description of photo:* (Left) Browntail webs that have been removed from a tree; note that they are at the tips of branches and are palm-sized. (Right) Browntail web still attached to the tip of a branch; note that on a sunny day, the white silk surrounding the web makes the web easier to find in a tree.

Bailey Public Library has a tree pruning pole available to borrow, for more information please stop in or contact the library at (207) 377-8673.

For more information on browntail moth, please visit the Maine Forest Service's Browntail Moth resource page at: [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest\\_health/invasive\\_threats/browntail\\_moth\\_info.htm#general](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm#general)