



WEST VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## Box Tree Moth

(*Cydalima perspectalis*)

Box Tree Moth (BTM) is a damaging pest, which feeds primarily on boxwoods (*Buxus* sp.). Native to East Asia, BTM has spread to Europe, Canada and the US. New York first confirmed the pest along Lake Ontario in 2021. Since then, it has been confirmed in Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and now, **West Virginia** in 2025.

Early infestations may go unnoticed. Multiple generations occur per year and the subsequent generations can cause complete defoliation on affected plants. When populations are severe, larvae will cause mortality by stripping the bark from the branches. Without treatment, infested plants will likely die due to feeding damage.

Monitoring and identification for this pest is important but low-level infestations are notoriously hard to identify. The small, lime-green caterpillars blend in with the foliage. Eggs are small, somewhat translucent and located on the underside of leaves. Webbing may be associated with the larvae and pupal stages. The infestation may only be apparent when defoliation has occurred. At that point, treatment may not be practical, and plant removal becomes the best option.

When discovered early, treatment can be successful by using multiple herbicides labeled for Box Tree Moth control. *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk) is a natural pesticide which kills caterpillars when ingested and is effective against BTM. It can be found at many garden centers under different brand names. Contact the WVDA for more details on treatment options. Always read and follow label directions on pesticides.

If you suspect you have BTM damaged boxwoods, contact the WV Department of Agriculture at (304) 558-2212 or [bugbusters@wvda.us](mailto:bugbusters@wvda.us).



**Boxwoods are not native to WV but are common landscaping plants. They can be found near homes, businesses, churches and cemeteries.**

**Even though the pest can spread naturally, it is often moved on boxwood plants or on discarded hedge trimmings.**

**For identification, send a high quality, close-up photograph to:**  
**[bugbusters@wvda.us](mailto:bugbusters@wvda.us)**

**For a map of WV infested counties:**

<https://agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/plant-industries/nursery-and-nursery-dealer/>

**Contact Information:**

**WVDA/Plant Industries**  
**1900 Kanawha Blvd., East**  
**Charleston, WV 25305**  
**(304)558-2212**

Additional information, including photos can be found by searching the internet or visiting:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/alert-box-tree-moth.pdf>

or

<https://cals.cornell.edu/integrated-pest-management/outreach-education/fact-sheets/box-tree-moth>