



## Redhumped caterpillar

*Schizura concinna*

Order Lepidoptera, Family Notodontidae; prominent  
Native pest

**Host plants:** Apple, aspen, birch, cherry, cottonwood, dogwood, elm, hickory, persimmon, poplar, redbud, sweetgum, walnut, willow, and flowering fruits (rosaceous plants).

**Description:** Adult moths are approximately 12 mm long and grayish brown with black markings. Larvae have reddish heads, and the first abdominal segment is enlarged to form a red hump. The body is yellow with black and white stripes, and there are many prominent black tubercles along its length. Mature larvae are 25–38 mm long.

**Life history:** Larvae hatch in mid to late summer. They are gregarious feeders. There are one to five generations a year.

**Overwintering:** Pupae inside cocoons in debris.

**Damage symptoms:** Young larvae skeletonize the underside of leaves. Older larvae consume leaves to the midrib. Defoliation of branches may occur on large trees, while smaller trees may be completely defoliated.

**Monitoring:** Beginning in August, look for larvae feeding in groups. Look for signs of leaf skeletonization, and later in the summer, look for signs of defoliation by larger larvae.

**Physical control:** For light infestations, and where accessible, prune larvae.

**Chemical control:** *Bacillus thuringiensis* is effective against young larvae. Horticultural oil is effective against young larvae. Use contact insecticides for older larvae when present in large numbers.

**Biological control:** Two parasitic wasps, *Hyposoter fugitivus* and *Apanteles* spp., reduce numbers of redhumped caterpillars. Generalist predators include spiders, lacewings, bigeyed bugs, and damsel bugs. Generally, control of redhumped caterpillar is only necessary on young trees. If 80 to 90% of the larvae in the second brood are parasitized, no treatment is necessary. However, if no parasitoids are found, and four or more colonies are found per tree, treatment is warranted.

**Plant mortality risk:** Low

**Biorational pesticides:** *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, diflubenzuron, insecticidal soap, pyrethrins, spinosad, tenbufenozide

**Conventional pesticides:** acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos (nursery only), cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, fluralinate, lambda-cyhalothrin, malathion, permethrin



Redhumped caterpillar larva. (210)  
Photo: David Laughlin