



For a number of years, several cities and counties in our region have been battling cankerworms, also called inchworms. The green or greenish brown cankerworm can become a nuisance in the spring when the tiny green larvae begin descending from tree tops on silky threads entangling anything underneath. They eat the leaves of the trees that they hatch in and can defoliate them quickly, weakening, but rarely killing them.

In the fall, the adult female wingless moth begins her climb up the same tree from which she descended to lay her eggs for the next spring. The cycle continues yearly and the infestation can increase, endangering the health of affected trees, unless it is stopped. ***While Gastonia appeared to be unaffected for many years, we are beginning to see cankerworm infestations in areas throughout the City.***

Types of Trees Affected

Cankerworms will eat almost any kind of deciduous tree and shrub (plants that shed their leaves in the fall) but prefer maples, oaks and elms, so make sure to band those trees as well as any trees with previous cankerworm damage.

The Cankerworm Control Calendar

Time of Year	What to look for	What to do
Oct.-Nov.		Wrap trees with banding material. Do not apply the sticky substance (Tanglefoot™ or other similar products) to the outside of the band yet. You don't want falling leaves to adhere, which can block the adult females from being trapped. If you do this step now, you will have less to do when the females emerge to lay their eggs after the first frost, which can be unpredictable in our area.
After leaves have fallen but before the first frost/Dec.		Apply sticky substance to banding material.
After the first frost	Adult females begin climbing up the trees to mate & lay eggs. The females will become trapped in the the sticky substance if your trees are banded properly.	
March/Early spring		Remove tree bands (so any eggs that may have attached do not hatch) and dispose in garbage.
Early spring	Tiny green to greenish brown worms dangle from silky threads from the trees and descend to the ground. If you've banded your trees, it should help control the infestation.	You can spray small trees with pesticides.
Oct.-Nov.		Re-band trees as part of an ongoing control cycle.

For more information: call 704-866-6843 or visit: cityofgastonia.com

Banding Together

Banding trees in November and December is one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to control cankerworm populations. **Starting this fall, the City will begin banding trees on City property in selected affected areas. Residents in areas with known infestations are encouraged to band trees on their properties.** Other residents may want to band their trees as a preventive measure.

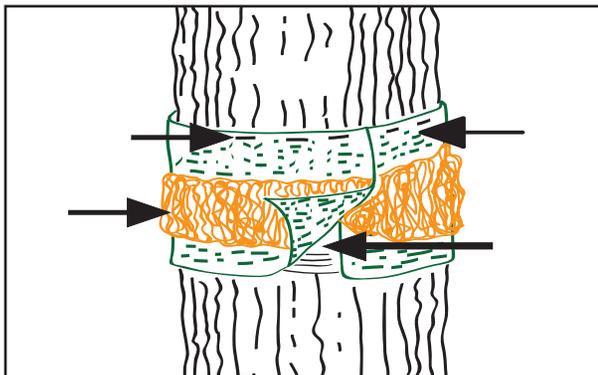
How to Band Trees

A sticky, glue-like substance (Tanglefoot™ or a similar product) is applied to a band around the tree, rather than the tree itself, to protect the bark. It should be applied after most of the leaves have fallen. Area garden and home improvement stores sell tree banding supplies and there are private contractors that will install bands on your trees for a fee.

Step 1: Install a strip of batting or insulation around the tree a few feet above ground level and below all limbs.

Step 2: Position a band of tar paper or roofing felt 6-12 inches wide, around the trunk circumference covering the batting. Short staples may be used for this. Do not use nails. Electrical tape might be used for small, smooth-barked trees.

Step 3: After the leaves have fallen and before the first frost, apply the sticky substance or sticky material in a band several inches wide onto the tar paper. Wear disposable gloves for easy clean up. Bands must remain sticky and clear of excessive debris. If the trap becomes clogged with leaves or insects, you should clean it, refresh the sticky substance or install a new band.



While large trees are the main focus of banding, in order to be effective, all trees should be banded. The worms feed on all types of trees. The bands should be removed during the first week of February and disposed of in the garbage to prevent eggs that may have attached from hatching.

Effectiveness of Pesticides

One of the safest and more benign pesticides is Bacillus thuringiensis or B.t. This product is sold under various brand names including Dipel or Thuricide. This naturally occurring bacterium causes a bacterial disease specific to moths and butterflies. It has been used by organic farmers and gardeners for decades with no known adverse effects on humans, wildlife, pets, fish, or honey bees. Sprays containing B.t. should be used in the spring while the small caterpillars are feeding. They ingest the pesticide and die a few days later. Don't expect immediate results. Homeowners can use this product on small trees, but large trees will likely require professional spray equipment.

Insecticidal soap is also safe and has no residual, that is, it will kill only the soft-bodied insects that directly contact the spray. About three sprays per week will probably be required.

This video is from the City of Charlotte:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JKEACyOMHE>

They're Here...
"Banding" Together to Control
Cankerworms




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Great Place. Great People. Great Promise.