

Municipal District of Bonnyville Media Release Tent Caterpillars Come Crawling Back

June 1, 2017 – Some M.D. residents, especially those around Muriel Lake and close to Cold Lake, may have noticed the tent caterpillars are back.

“This is the fourth year of the cycle,” said M.D. Assistant Agriculture Fieldman, Janice Boden. “This infestation should be just about done.”

And while the creepy crawlers might give you the heebie-jeebies, they aren’t harmful to humans or trees.

“They won’t kill the tree,” Boden said. “They’ll just eat the leaves, which will grow back again during the summer.”

In addition to the Forest tent caterpillars, residents may have noticed an increase in the black fly population. “The flies are the caterpillars’ natural predator. When the caterpillar population goes up, the black flies come along to help get rid of them,” Boden explained.

So, what can you do to hasten the departure of the tent caterpillars? Boden has two solutions.

The first is a biological insecticide called BTK (available at Home Hardware in Bonnyville and Canadian Tire in Cold Lake). “This insecticide will get rid of the caterpillars without killing the good guys – bees, dragonflies, ladybugs, etc.” she said.

The second solution is to clip the tents and brush the caterpillars into a plastic bag early in the morning. “They are all clustered together and not eating or moving very much at that time of the day,” Boden said. “That makes it a little easier to contain them.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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