

## BE A PART OF PROTECTING THE LAND YOU LOVE



When it comes to managing a forest, tent caterpillars can be a considerable threat and flies a great ally. The forest tent caterpillar is rated as one of Canada's top six forest enemies. Often confused with the eastern tent caterpillar, the forest tent caterpillar doesn't actually create tents, but instead spins a silk mat on trunks and branches of trees. Unlike the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB), the forest tent caterpillar is native to North America and a natural part of the forest ecosystem.

Many insects, birds and mammals rely on tent caterpillars as a food source. Caterpillar



droppings help to fertilize soil. Periodic insect infestations help renew a forest by opening up the canopy, allowing light to reach lower layers. The forest tent caterpillar, however, can cause serious damage to its favourite hosts including aspen, oak, ash, birch and maple (except red maples) by eating the tree's leaves.

There is a predictable pattern to forest tent caterpillar attacks, with outbreaks happening about every 10 years. Current numbers in the Credit River watershed are rising slightly. Expanding populations of forest tent caterpillars are naturally controlled by unfavourable spring weather, the starvation of larva, disease and parasites. For example, the maggots of the *Sarcophaga aldrichi* fly kill caterpillars by boring into the cocoon. These flies don't bite, but land on anything that isn't moving which can make them very irritating to humans.

When forest tent caterpillar populations begin to cause serious ecological and economic

impacts, it's important to apply sound pest management practises. This will become even more critical in coming years with added challenges from climate change and growing non-native insect invasions. These can worsen the impacts of native insect outbreaks pushing many forests beyond their normal abilities. It is becoming increasingly important to understand forest ecology and to monitor changes. Knowing how to make good decisions will help us protect forest health so forests continue to be places to wander and enjoy wildlife.



Learn about our upcoming Forest Health Workshop inside.

**INSIDE STORY**  
**THE GREAT FALL**  
**MIGRATION**



# BIRDS OF A FEATHER: THE GREAT FALL MIGRATION



Cedar waxwing flock

We don't only see changing fall colours in trees. They're also in the feathers of some birds. To prepare for their fall migration journey, birds molt at the end of summer to get into top flying condition. Birds shed and replace old, worn feathers. Some birds change appearance during this transition, becoming less colourful and looking like different birds entirely compared to their bright breeding plumage.

Fall is a busy time for birdwatching. While you won't hear the distinctive mating songs, it's a great time to practice your identification skills or simply see the diversity and number of birds. Over 200 birds pass through the Credit River watershed, often following the path of the Credit River to the Lake Ontario shoreline. A forest or shoreline can transform overnight as flocks of birds arrive under darkness from August to October.

Most bird populations are declining. The top reason is habitat loss throughout their range, including the habitat they need during migration. Climate change and severe weather events are also affecting migrating birds. Birds returning in the spring may miss the peak insect period when warmer spring temperatures arrive earlier. This can result in fewer insects to feed their young. Birds tend to travel in calm weather conditions and can be delayed or blown off-course during storms, reducing their survival rates.

Protecting natural features on your property – those important forests, wetlands and grasslands – give birds space to live and places to stop for refuelling during migration. Enhancing these areas by planting native species provide shelter and food sources for birds and improves overall functioning of the ecosystem.

You can see the incredible fall migration by visiting a few hot spots in the watershed. Forks of the Credit in Caledon and Rattray Marsh on the shores of Lake Ontario in Mississauga are popular birding spots. Natural areas on your own property may also attract migrating birds.

Birds take their time during fall migration, sometimes staying in one spot for several weeks. Be sure to have your binoculars handy!

**FALL BIRD  
MIGRATION CHECKLIST**

How many can you check off this season?

- Bay-breasted warbler
- Blackpoll warbler
- Blackburnian warbler
- Black-throated green warbler
- Brown creeper
- Indigo bunting
- Red-eyed vireo
- Ruby-crowned kinglet
- Scarlet tanager
- Wilson's warbler
- Winter wren
- Yellow-rumped warbler

**INDIGO BUNTING**



**Breeding**  
Credit: Kelly Colgan Azar

**Non-breeding**  
Credit: Kevin Bolton

**SCARLET TANAGER**



**Breeding**  
Credit: Jessica Maxstein

**Non-breeding**  
Credit: Matt Tillet

Keep a special eye out for these male birds as they molt. Their new less-flashy plumage helps them avoid detection by predators.



from the *Expert*

**Laura Timms, CVC Ecologist and Entomologist on Ticks and Lyme disease**

It's important to know that not all ticks carry Lyme disease. In Ontario, it is only the blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), also known as the deer tick, that can be infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

Blacklegged ticks are commonly found in woodlands and areas with tall grasses and shrubs. They tend to hang on the tips of grasses and shrubs, waiting for prey to brush by. Although it's important to be aware of ticks and on the lookout for bites, there are still very few confirmed endemic areas in southern Ontario with both blacklegged ticks and Lyme disease.

New locations of blackleg ticks are being observed in Ontario, so it's good to get in the habit of taking precautions to avoid bites in natural areas. Cover up and wear insect repellent. Check yourself, children and pets for ticks. Note that ticks need to be attached for more than 36 hours in order to transfer *Borrelia burgdorferi* to their prey.

If you've been bitten, remove the tick and see a doctor as soon as possible. Remember not all ticks, and not even all blacklegged ticks, carry Lyme disease.

For more information on ticks and Lyme disease, visit: [www.ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease](http://www.ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease).



Blacklegged tick

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In the fall, brook trout spawn in spring-fed streams. Females aggressively fan their tail fin over gravel beds to make a depression or bowl. Depending on their length, female brook trout can lay between 100 and 2,000 eggs. Males will often fight over the right to fertilize the eggs.

Streams with brook trout are a sign of excellent water quality and healthy aquatic habitat. You will only find brook trout in cold, clean fresh water.



Photo by Jon Clayton, CVC

**LANDOWNER WORKSHOPS**

**FREE**

Saturday Nov. 26  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Centre 2000, Erin



**CREATE A PLAN FOR YOUR PROPERTY**

*For Rural Landowners:*  
**Caring For Your Land & Water**

- Attract wildlife
- Grow a forest

*For Equine Owners:*  
**Caring For Your Horse & Farm**

- Manage manure
- Improve pasture quality

**GRANTS AVAILABLE**

REGISTER AT [WWW.CREDITVALLEYCA.CA/EVENTS](http://WWW.CREDITVALLEYCA.CA/EVENTS)

**FOREST HEALTH WORKSHOP**

Saturday Sept. 17  
9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
\$10 + HST

CVC's Forestry Operations Centre  
15526 Heart Lake Road, Caledon

**HEAR FROM THE EXPERTS ABOUT**

**Presentation Topics**

- Forest invasive plants
- Common tree pests & diseases
- Emerging forest health concerns
- Landowner programs and services

**Walk n' Talk Tour**

Learn about forest health as we tour the CVC forest on site.

Light lunch included.



REGISTER AT [WWW.CREDITVALLEYCA.CA/EVENTS](http://WWW.CREDITVALLEYCA.CA/EVENTS)



## FARM GATE

# CONTROL BUCKTHORN ON YOUR FARM - YOUR SOYBEANS WILL THANK YOU!

Soybean aphids can seriously impact your soybean yield. Did you know that by removing invasive buckthorn from your woodlots and fence rows, you can help reduce the risk of crop failure from soybean aphids.

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), sometimes referred to as European buckthorn, is a shrub or small tree that grows up to six meters high. Found in habitats ranging from forests to meadows and hedgerows, it grows well in many soil types. It can be identified by its dark green, finely toothed, sub-opposite arranged leaves. You can also see a short, pointed, thorn-like tip on most branches. In late summer, buckthorn has clusters of black berries.



### WELLINGTON RURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

#### GRANTS FOR:

Well abandonment and upgrades  
Tree planting • Cover crops  
and more

Contact CVC to help plan your project.

[creditvalleyca.ca/wrwqp](http://creditvalleyca.ca/wrwqp)

Soybean aphids prefer to winter on buckthorn. In the fall, winged adults leave soybean fields looking for buckthorn on which to lay their eggs. During spring and summer, flying adult aphids seek out soybeans for food.

Unlike many other crop pests, the soybean aphid doesn't reproduce multiple times a year. Therefore, removing buckthorn will interrupt the crucial reproduction cycle for this pest, helping to limit any economic impact to your farm business. Removing buckthorn is most effective when it is young, by pulling or digging it up. If there is a stump, cutting and treating with an herbicide is more effective to prevent the stem from sending out new suckers and re-sprouting. Grazing and other chemical treatments are other options.

For more information about controlling buckthorn on your property, visit:  
[creditvalleyca.ca/invasives](http://creditvalleyca.ca/invasives)

Funding exists to help you take action on your farm:

**Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program  
Growing Forward 2**  
[www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org)

Contact Mark Eastman, Agricultural Extension, at 905-670-1615 ext. 430 for more information.



Buckthorn thorn-like tip



Buckthorn fruit

## COMING EVENTS

Register at: [creditvalleyca.ca/events](http://creditvalleyca.ca/events)

*Events are free unless otherwise indicated*

### Forest Health Workshop

Saturday Sept. 17, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
CVC's Forestry Operations Centre  
Cost: \$10

### Working Hard in Our Backyard: Nurturing Nature

A Friends of the Credit Stewardship Forum  
Saturday Oct. 1, 9 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.  
University of Toronto, Mississauga

### Caring For Your Land and Water

Saturday Nov. 26, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Centre 2000, Erin

### Caring For Your Horse and Farm

Saturday Nov. 26 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Centre 2000, Erin

*Funding in support of Credit Valley  
Conservation programs, workshops  
and events is generously provided by  
our regional and municipal partners.*

*CVC Countryside Stewardship programs are available to residents and landowners within the Credit River watershed. Our neighbouring conservation authorities offer similar programs. We would be pleased to direct those who live outside the Credit River watershed to the appropriate agency.*



COUNTRYSIDE  
stewardship

CVC was established in 1954 with a mandate to protect natural resources in the Credit River watershed. We have been working for more than 60 years with our partner municipalities and stakeholders to build a thriving environment that protects, connects and sustains us.

