

Pest Profile



Photo credit: [Negin Almassi](#), Forest Preserves of Cook County, Bugwood.org; [Clemson University](#) - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

Common Name: Giant Leopard moth (adult); giant wooly bear (larva)

Scientific Name: *Hypercompe scribonia*

Order and Family: Lepidoptera: Erebidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	0.8 mm	Spherical, pearly gray
Larva/Nymph	~75 mm	<p>The head, thorax, and abdominal segments 4, 5, 9, and 10 of early instars are orange. Abdominal segments 1-3 and 6-8 are dark brown, and there are orange mid-dorsal and lateral lines that run the length of the body. The spiracles are yellow. The body is covered with stiff black setae (hairs).</p> <p>Late stage larvae are black with red spiracles and inter-segmental areas and are covered with shiny black, bristly setae.</p>
Adult	Wing span 57 – 91mm	<p>Large white moth with highly variable spot pattern. Spots on thorax and forewings may be hollow black, solid, or iridescent blue, and in rare cases absent. Spots on the costal margin (leading edge) of wing usually solid.</p> <p>The dorsal side (back side covered by wings) of the abdomen can be iridescent blue-black with orange lateral stripes or orange with large blue-black spots.</p> <p>Legs black with white bands.</p>

Pupa (if applicable)		Black with reddish brown spiracles (breathing holes) and covered in yellow net-like cocoons with small amber beads at the junctions of the threads.
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Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing (larva)

Host plant/s: Giant leopard moth larvae feed on a wide variety of low-growing forbs and woody plants including banana, cherry, cabbage, dandelion, maples, orange, sunflowers, violets, and willows.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): It is likely that the giant leopard moth feeds on one host briefly and then moves to the next. During their foraging, the caterpillars may sequester toxic chemicals from certain plants for their own defense.

Giant leopard moth caterpillars are primarily nocturnal, and are often seen crossing roads during the fall while seeking sites to spend the winter. These moths are not economically important and no control measures are recommended.

References:

Giant Leopard Moth. (n.d.). *Butterflies and Moths of North America*.
<https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/species/Hypercompe-scribonia>

Hall, D. (n.d.) *Featured Creatures*. University of Florida Department of Entomology & Nematology.
http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/MISC/MOTHS/Hypercompe_scribonia.htm