

# VARIABLE OAKLEAF CATERPILLAR—*Heterocampa manteo*

**HOSTS:** Oak, elm, boxelder (Manitoba maple), apple, and other hardwood trees

**IDENTIFICATION, LIFE CYCLE, AND DAMAGE:** Mature larvae are about 37 mm long and yellowish-green, usually with a broad dark red dorsal stripe. The ash-gray moths have a wingspan of 37 to 47 mm.

Larvae overwinter in the top soil or duff. Moths emerge in spring (May in Nebraska) and lay eggs on leaves. Young larvae feed on the lower surfaces of leaves; older larvae consume entire leaves, leaving only veins. There are two generations per year in the southern Great Plains, one in the north.

Outbreaks may cover large areas. Young trees that are repeatedly defoliated may be killed.

**CONTROL:** Spray foliage with carbaryl or

acephate in mid to late June while caterpillars are still small and defoliation is limited. These insecticides also will kill beneficial insect parasites and predators that feed on the eggs and pupae of variable oakleaf caterpillars.



Variable oakleaf caterpillar