# Tredegar Park cloaked in ghostly webs by Bird-Cherry Ermine moth caterpillars



In a remarkable natural spectacle, Tredegar Park has recently become cloaked in what some have described as “ghostly webs.” This eerie appearance is the work of thousands of Bird-Cherry Ermine moth caterpillars, which have spun elaborate silk webs over trees, benches, and railings throughout the park. The striking visuals have led many onlookers to marvel at the transformation, though there is no cause for alarm—it’s simply the lifecycle of the moth at play.

The Bird-Cherry Ermine moth, scientifically named Yponomeuta evonymella, plays a crucial role in this seasonal phenomenon. Its caterpillars, which hatch in the spring, are known for their communal behaviour, feeding gregariously on the leaves of bird cherry trees (Prunus padus) and weaving extensive webs for protection and group feeding. Observers note that such webs can cover entire trees, offering a temporary but dramatic sight. According to butterfly conservation experts, while this can lead to significant leaf loss—commonly referred to as defoliation—the affected trees generally recover within a few weeks as the caterpillars move towards their adult stage, typically from June to September.

Despite the initial shock of seeing trees adorned with what looks like ethereal cobwebs, this event happens in cycles. The webs serve a practical purpose, providing a haven for the larvae while also making them less susceptible to predation. This natural process is not unprecedented; there have been similar outbreaks in various regions over the years, highlighting the ability of bird cherry trees to rejuvenate after such episodes. The adult moths, strikingly white with black spots, emerge at night, often attracted to artificial lights, further adding to their allure.

Historical records indicate that similar occurrences have taken place in areas such as Bergen, Norway, where the Bird-Cherry Ermine moth has been observed causing significant webbing on trees. Such events are typically cyclical, with outbreaks occurring every 10 to 12 years. Previous studies confirm that these natural phenomena are transient, with the webs disappearing by summer's end, allowing the ecosystem to restore itself.

While the dramatic appearance of the webs can be disconcerting, conservation efforts continue to underscore that this phenomenon is a part of the natural lifecycle of the Bird-Cherry Ermine moth. It is noteworthy that this species, despite its impressive silk-spinning capabilities, is not considered a threat to biodiversity, as it is not listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Therefore, residents and visitors to Tredegar Park can take solace in the fact that the whimsical webs are merely a fleeting glimpse into the remarkable interplay between nature and its cycles.

The captivating views offered by the moths are a reminder of the subtle complexities of our environment. As communities reflect on the transformation of Tredegar Park, they are invited to appreciate the beauty and intricacies of the natural world, which constantly evolves around them.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
3. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
4. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
5. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
6. Paragraphs 2, 3
7. Paragraphs 2, 3

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25180592.tredegar-park-covered-ghostly-webs-thousands-bugs/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/bird-cherry-ermine> - The Bird-cherry Ermine (Yponomeuta evonymella) is a moth species characterized by its white forewings with black spots and a wingspan of 16–25 mm. It is commonly found across the UK, especially in the south midlands and northwards, and is considered an immigrant in the south. The moth's larvae feed gregariously on bird cherry (Prunus padus), creating extensive webs that can cover entire trees. These webs provide protection and facilitate group feeding, leading to significant defoliation during outbreaks. The adult moths are nocturnal, flying from June to September, and are attracted to light. Despite the dramatic appearance of the webs, the trees typically recover, and the moth is not listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
3. <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/why-moths-matter/occasionally-troublesome-moths> - Ermine moths, including the Bird-cherry Ermine (Yponomeuta evonymella), are known for their extensive webbing produced by larvae feeding on host plants like bird cherry (Prunus padus). These webs can cover entire trees, giving them a ghostly appearance. While the webs may look alarming, they are a natural phenomenon, and the trees usually recover within a few weeks. The webs provide protection for the larvae and facilitate group feeding, leading to defoliation. However, the trees often bounce back, and the webbing disappears over the summer. The adult moths are nocturnal and attracted to light.
4. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/10500138.caterpillars-weave-ghostly-web-over-trees-benches-and-railings-in-newports-tredegar-park/> - In Newport's Tredegar Park, thousands of caterpillars from the Bird-cherry Ermine moth have created extensive webs over trees, benches, and railings. The larvae feed on the leaves of bird cherry (Prunus padus), leading to defoliation. Despite the alarming appearance, the trees typically recover, as observed in previous years. The adult moths, which emerge in July, are white with black spots and are nocturnal. The webs are a natural occurrence, and the caterpillars do not cause long-term harm to the trees.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird-cherry_ermine> - The Bird-cherry Ermine (Yponomeuta evonymella) is a moth species with a wingspan of 16–25 mm, characterized by white forewings with black spots. Native to Europe and parts of Asia, it primarily feeds on bird cherry (Prunus padus). The larvae form communal webs that can cover entire trees, leading to defoliation. The adult moths are nocturnal, flying from July to August, and are attracted to light. Despite the defoliation, the trees usually recover, and the moth is not listed on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
6. <https://www.uib.no/en/universitygardens/171891/bird-cherry-ermine-rampant-bergen> - In Bergen, Norway, the Bird-cherry Ermine moth has caused extensive webbing on bird cherry trees, leading to defoliation. The larvae feed on the leaves, and the webs provide protection and facilitate group feeding. Despite the alarming appearance, the trees typically recover, and the webbing disappears over the summer. The adult moths emerge in late summer, lay eggs on the twigs near buds, and the cycle continues. The phenomenon occurs every 10 to 12 years, with the last significant outbreak in 2007.
7. <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/2014/07/the-most-disliked-moth/> - The Bird-cherry Ermine moth (Yponomeuta evonymella) is known for its larvae that feed gregariously on bird cherry (Prunus padus), creating extensive webs that can cover entire trees, leading to defoliation. Despite the alarming appearance, the trees usually recover, and the webbing disappears over the summer. The adult moths are nocturnal and attracted to light. The webs are a natural phenomenon, and the caterpillars do not cause long-term harm to the trees. The moth is part of the 'Small Ermine' group, which includes several species with similar behaviors.