



On Monday January 7 the Formentera Council's environment office rolled out a new initiative to control infestation on the island of the invasive caterpillar known as the pine processionary. The administration is bringing in a pair of professional forest service workers to administer a treatment strategy based on the manual and mechanical removal —and subsequent controlled burning— of the processionary's nests, or “tents”. In 2019 the expected cost of the programme is €5,500 (VAT included).

Locals lending a hand

Islanders wishing to report newly-detected nests to Council personnel have three ways to do it: sending GPS info via smart-phone app Línea Verde; phoning the CiF environment office at 971.32.12.10 or writing the office an email (mediambient@conselldeformentera.cat).

The push is coordinated in tandem with the regional ministry of environment and is part of a strategy to control the pine processionary's spread that was requested by the Formentera Council following the passage of related measures by Formentera's Consell d'Entitats and a subsequent vote by the island's plenary assembly. Two other groups, the Balearic healthy forests' division (Ibanat) and environmental service agents (whose title is abbreviated to “AMA”), are also participating in the initiative.

The Govern balear is concurrently overseeing air dustings by helicopter with a pest-control agent called *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The next is scheduled for October.

Department head Daisee Aguilera pointed out that drops in pine processionary tents have been registered in areas receiving treatment while, on the stretch of land 50 metres inland from the island's coastline where aeral dusting is prohibited, new tents have been reported. Aguilera said the data gave weight to the “argument in favour of aereal spraying and of the need for continued manual and mechanical clearing of the pests' tents”.