

FACTSHEET

Plant Protection & Quarantine

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

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Don't Move Gypsy Moth

Planning to move from an area infested with gypsy moth to an uninfested area? Moving your camper or recreational vehicle across border or State lines? You need to know about a regulation intended to prevent the spread of this pest.

Recent studies show that most new, isolated infestations of the gypsy moth were started from egg masses transported on outdoor household articles—garbage cans, lawn furniture, children's toys—any item accessible to the female moth at egg-laying time. As a result, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) gypsy moth quarantine regulations require that such articles be inspected for all gypsy moth life stages prior to movement outside of a regulated area.

Why Regulation Is Needed

If you have lived where the gypsy moth is prevalent, you know the damage these leaf-eating caterpillars can cause. They defoliate trees and shrubs, giving summer landscapes a barren, winter look. Gypsy moths can defoliate up to 13 million acres of trees in 1 season. They crawl on homes, litter lawn furniture and pools, and make outdoor activities difficult to enjoy.

Unfortunately, people can unintentionally carry egg masses with them when they travel, making it easier for gypsy moths to spread far from their old neighborhood. Millions of Federal and State tax dollars have been spent in recent years to limit the movement of this pest and to eradicate the isolated infestations established in previously uninfested areas.

Failure to inspect household articles for gypsy moth life stages prior to movement from a regulated area is a violation of USDA quarantine regulations and may result in significant civil penalties. Inspecting your property for gypsy moths goes beyond being a good neighbor: it is required by law. **Don't be responsible for moving an old pest to a new neighborhood.**

Inspect for Gypsy Moth

You are responsible for making sure that your outdoor items don't move the gypsy moth. The quarantine regulations allow for self-inspection, and this factsheet can assist you. To do the inspection yourself, include anything accessible to a gypsy moth. Inspect any article left outdoors, stored in areas open to the outside, or stored indoors but used outdoors.

Remember, you are the key to preventing the movement of gypsy moth on outdoor household articles, including recreational vehicles. Do your part to prevent the spread of this pest.

How To Recognize Gypsy Moth Life Stages

To inspect your outdoor articles, you need to be able to identify gypsy moth life stages. Most important is the egg mass.

The gypsy moth goes through four stages of development—egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (cocoon), and adult (moth). It has one generation per year. During the summer, female moths attach egg masses to trees, stones, walls, logs, and other outdoor objects including outdoor household objects. Each egg mass contains up to 1,000 eggs and is covered with buff or yellowish "hairs" from the abdomen of the female. The velvety egg masses vary in size but average about 1.5 inches long and .75 inch wide (roughly between the size of a dime and a quarter).

In the Southern United States, eggs begin hatching in late March. Eggs start to hatch around early May in the northernmost United States. The grayish, hairy caterpillars are easy to identify when about half-grown by pairs of red and blue dots on their backs. Mature caterpillars are from 1.5 to 2.5 inches long.

Although they are voracious eaters, caterpillars stop feeding when they enter the pupal or cocoon stage, ranging from May in the Southern United States to early July in the Northern United States, varying with weather and climate. Adult moths emerge from the dark-brown pupal cases 10 to 14 days later. Males have light tan to brown wings marked with dark, wavy bands, and a 1.5-inch wingspread. Female moths are larger than males

and generally white, with a wingspread of about 2.5 inches. Despite having larger wings, the female moths cannot fly.

Neither sex feeds in the moth stage; adults mate and lay eggs only. The eggs are the dormant stage of the life cycle, allowing the pest to survive winter weather. Egg-hatch the following spring starts the life cycle over again.

What To Do If You Find Gypsy Moth Life Stages

An effective way to dispose of gypsy moth life stages is to remove them by hand. Scrape egg masses from their locations with a putty knife, stiff brush, or similar handtool. Dispose of egg masses and other life stages in a container of hot water, household bleach, ammonia, or kerosene.

Gypsy moth hairs, found attached to all life stages, can cause people who are allergic to them to have skin rashes or respiratory reactions. If necessary, wear gloves, protective clothing, and a dust mask.

Additional Information

For more information about the Federal regulations on moving outdoor household articles, contact one of the following:

- Your State or Province's regulatory officials, usually listed under department of agriculture, plant protection or regulatory division, in the State or Provincial government section of your telephone directory.
- A U.S. Federal regulatory official, listed in the Federal Government section of your telephone directory under USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine. (If you have access to the Internet, point your browser to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq> and use the "Comments" link to send us an e-mail request for more information.)

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Self-Inspection Checklist

Important: Make sure this checklist goes with your household goods when you move!

Checklist and Record of Your Self-Inspection

Date: _____

Place Inspected: _____

Recreational or Camping Items

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice chests | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball backboards | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Tarps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor homes | <input type="checkbox"/> Tents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boats | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> Waders or boots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boat trailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobiles | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campers | | |

Household Items

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air conditioners | <input type="checkbox"/> Ladders | <input type="checkbox"/> Tanks for propane and oil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barrels | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor doormats | <input type="checkbox"/> Television antennas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard and wooden boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor thermometers | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash cans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothesline poles | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerators | <input type="checkbox"/> Washing machines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothespin bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheets of plastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Water hoses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Empty plant containers | <input type="checkbox"/> Shutters | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather vanes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firewood | <input type="checkbox"/> Storage sheds | <input type="checkbox"/> Window awnings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houseplants taken outside during the summer | <input type="checkbox"/> Storm/screen doors and windows | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Building Materials

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bricks | <input type="checkbox"/> Roofing materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Water pipes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cinder blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewer pipes | <input type="checkbox"/> Welding equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cement-mixing tubs | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools and toolboxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Workbenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber | | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Yard and Garden Items

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal houses (e.g., doghouses, rabbit hutches) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs and posts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barbecue grills | <input type="checkbox"/> Fertilizer spreaders | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowblowers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birdbaths | <input type="checkbox"/> Flagpoles | <input type="checkbox"/> Storage sheds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird feeders | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden tillers | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird houses | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and shrubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bug lights | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawnmowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Trellises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carts | <input type="checkbox"/> Mailboxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelbarrows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coldframes | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Yard decorations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driftwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Porch or patio furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Children's Playthings

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycles, tricycles | <input type="checkbox"/> Swingsets | <input type="checkbox"/> Other outside toys like trucks, sand molds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playhouses | <input type="checkbox"/> Tire swings | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandboxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Wagons | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleds, toboggans | | |

Other Items

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car parts | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm items | <input type="checkbox"/> Stored tires (snow tires) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car ramps | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cars or trucks | | |

Please inspect anything that was stored outside!

Signature: _____