

Don't Move Gypsy Moth

The gypsy moth is one of the most destructive pests of trees and shrubs to ever be introduced into the United States. Gorging themselves on the leaves of up to 300 host species, gypsy moth caterpillars defoliate and weaken the trees that make up our national forests and community landscapes. Those trees that are already suffering from drought, disease, or pests are especially vulnerable and may be killed by the gypsy moths' repeated defoliation. Before your next move, whether it's out of State or just across town, be sure to fully inspect household goods and help prevent the spread of gypsy moth to new areas.

The Problem

The gypsy moth has infested many States in the northeast United States, resulting in massive defoliation of the regions' precious trees. If you live where the gypsy moth is prevalent, you know the damage this insect can cause. The leaf-eating caterpillars devour the leaves of many hardwood trees and shrubs, giving summer scenes a barren, wintry look. Gypsy moth larvae have been known to defoliate up to 13 million acres of trees in one season, damaging local ecosystems, and killing trees outright. The larvae also crawl on homes, litter lawn furniture and pools, and make outdoor activities hard to enjoy.

The gypsy moth is an insect that goes through four stages of development—egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (cocoon), and adult (moth). It has one generation a year. During the summer months, female moths attach egg masses to trees, stones, walls, logs, and other outdoor objects, including household items. Each egg mass contains up to 1,000 eggs and is covered with buff or yellowish "hairs." The velvety egg masses are on average 1-1/2 inches long and three-fourths of an inch wide. After eggs hatch in the spring, the caterpillars feed voraciously and grow to 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 inches in length.

The gypsy moth often travels into noninfested areas when people moving from an infested State transport outdoor furniture or equipment with gypsy moth egg masses attached.

Affected Areas

The areas infested with gypsy moth change each year. You can find a map of the current regulated areas at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/gypsy_moth/downloads/gypmoth.pdf.

The Solution

Helping to prevent the spread of gypsy moth is easy. Simply inspect household articles—such as outdoor furniture, lawn equipment, or children's outside toys—for gypsy moth egg masses.

Inspecting household articles, however, goes beyond being a good neighbor; **it is required by law**. USDA requires anyone moving from a State infested with the gypsy moth to a noninfested State to provide an official certificate of inspection of all common outdoor household articles that could carry the gypsy moth. To meet the requirements, you can perform a self-inspection of household goods or you may pay a USDA-certified pesticide applicator to inspect the articles you plan to move. The driver of your moving van must keep this certificate on hand during the move in case it is requested at any point during the trip.

Inspection Options

Self Inspection—If you decide to do the gypsy moth inspection yourself, include anything accessible to the insect. Inspect any article left outdoors, stored in areas open to the outside, or stored indoors but used outside. Use the checklist provided to facilitate the inspection. This completed and signed checklist will be your official certificate of self-inspection. This certificate should be included with the paperwork accompanying your move and given to the driver of the moving van. To assist you in your inspection, you can access color pictures of the gypsy moth's life stages online at <http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=165>.

Follow these simple steps for gypsy moth inspection:

1. Carefully examine each article.
2. Remove and destroy any life stages found.
3. Check the item off the list.
4. Enter the date and place inspected.
5. Sign at the bottom.

If you are moving between April 1 and August 31, when female moths lay eggs and the caterpillars spread, you should inspect your articles on moving day if at all possible. However, if you complete

your inspection before moving day, you should protect the articles from any further possibility of infestation by:

- Sealing them with tarpaulin or plastic bags,
- Packing them immediately into a moving van or truck and keeping the doors closed or covered, or
- Storing them indoors.

Disposable plastic bags will safeguard your articles for several days before a move. On moving day, simply remove the bags and leave them behind.

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 hand tool. Dispose of egg masses and other life stages in a container of hot, soapy water or place them in a plastic bag, seal it, and set it in the sun.

Professional Inspection—Participating State-licensed pesticide applicators are trained to inspect your household items and treat heavily infested articles or inaccessible spaces with registered pesticides if necessary. These persons are also authorized to issue you a certificate stating that your outdoor household items are free of gypsy moth. A certificate must always accompany outdoor household items in transit. This certificate will satisfy the requirements of all noninfested States and will relieve you of liability should your items be re-inspected by a State official in the destination State and be found to harbor gypsy moth.

You may find pesticide applicators that participate in the program through local advertising.

Self-Inspection Checklist

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

Checklist and Record of Your Self-Inspection

Date: _____

Property address: _____

Recreational or Camping Items

- Backpacks
- Basketball backboards
- Bicycles
- Boats
- Boat trailers
- Campers
- Ice chests
- Motorcycles
- Motor homes
- Recreational vehicles

- Snowmobiles
 - Sports equipment
 - Tarps
 - Tents
 - Waders or boots
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Household Items

- Air conditioners
 - Barrels
 - Cardboard and wooden boxes
 - Clothesline poles
 - Clothespin bags
 - Empty plant containers
 - Firewood
 - House plants taken outside during the summer
 - Ladders
 - Outdoor doormats
 - Outdoor thermometers
 - Refrigerators
 - Sheets of plastic
 - Shutters
 - Storage sheds
 - Storm/screen doors and windows
 - Tanks for propane and oil
 - Television antennas
 - Trash cans
 - Washing machines
 - Water hoses
 - Weather vanes
 - Window awnings
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Building Materials

- Bricks
 - Cinder blocks
 - Cement mixing tubs
 - Lumber
 - Roofing materials
 - Sewer pipes
 - Tools and toolboxes
 - Water pipes
 - Welding equipment
 - Workbenches
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Yard and Garden Items

- Animal houses (doghouses, rabbit hutches, etc.)
- Barbecue grills
- Birdbaths
- Bird feeders
- Bird houses
- Bug lights
- Carts

- Coldframes
 - Driftwood
 - Fencing
 - Fertilizer spreaders
 - Flagpoles
 - Garden tillers
 - Garden tools
 - Lawnmowers
 - Mailboxes
 - Picnic tables
 - Porch or patio furniture
 - Signs and posts
 - Snowblowers
 - Storage sheds
 - Swimming pools
 - Tractors and trailers
 - Trees and shrubs
 - Trellises
 - Wheelbarrows
 - Yard decorations
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Children's Playthings

- Bicycles, tricycles
 - Playhouses
 - Sandboxes
 - Sleds, toboggans
 - Swingsets
 - Tire swings
 - Wagons
 - Other outside toys like trucks or sand molds
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Other Items

- Cars or trucks
 - Car parts
 - Car ramps
 - Farm implements
 - Plants
 - Stored tires (snow tires)
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Please inspect anything that was stored outside!

Signature: _____

[If the inspection was done by a commercial inspection company, provide the name of the firm and its phone number.]

Additional Information

For more information on gypsy moth, please visit the APHIS Web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/gypsy_moth/index.shtml.

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