

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Protect Our Environment Year-Round—Here's How

(NAPS)—Invasive pests threaten to destroy the forests and crops that beautify our lives and put food on our tables. Fortunately, no matter the season, you can take simple steps to help stop the spread of these damaging, non-native insects and other species.

The USDA has identified 19 destructive “Hungry Pests,” the invasive species that people are most likely to spread accidentally. While Hungry Pests often arrive through commercial trade, members of the public can unknowingly spread them once they are here. But by learning a few simple actions, you help to protect so much that we value. In fact, you could decide to take just two actions each season of the year and make a huge difference!

Spring

As you come out to enjoy the warming days, invasive pests are also becoming more active. April is Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month and a good time to learn the signs of these pests and how you can help stop their spread. When buying plants, buy from dealers—including those online or “pop-up” vendors—who follow USDA regulations to ensure plants are free of invasive pests. If you live in the northeast part of the country, look for gypsy moth egg masses on patio furniture and other outdoor items. Carefully remove and dunk them in warm, soapy water.

Summer

Planning to travel this summer? Bring back happy memories but leave plants and produce—and the Hungry Pests that may be infesting them—behind. If traveling in the United States, be sure to wash trailers, campers and even bikes that you have kept outdoors, before taking them elsewhere. Also, clean camping gear free of dirt that may hide pests. In August, Tree Check Month, protect your trees from invasive,



Any time is a good time to help protect trees and plants from Hungry Pests.

tree-killing beetles. Look for dime-sized, round holes in your trees. They could be signs of the invasive Asian longhorned beetle. If you see any holes, report them to local agricultural officials.

Fall

Enjoy campfires and roasting s'mores in the crisp, cool weather. But remember: If you move firewood to another area, you may also move invasive pests on or inside the wood. So buy or responsibly gather firewood near the place you plan to burn it. If you bring in the harvest from your garden, but you live in an area known to have invasive pests, please keep your homegrown plants and produce at home.

Winter

Take your mind off the cold and plan for your spring garden. When buying seeds online, take care to only buy from established sources that follow USDA's regulations to keep plants pest-free. And please be careful when sending or receiving international gifts. Greenery, seeds, plants and citrus may be packing Hungry Pests.

When it comes to protecting our country from invasive pests, you make all the difference. Keep these tips as handy reminders of ways you can help throughout the year. Learn more about the pests of concern in your area by visiting www.HungryPests.com.