

# “I LOVE CAMP! I COULD JUST EAT IT UP!”

Dear Camp Leader:

Our parks, forests, and crops are under attack—and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs your help! Invasive species eliminate jobs, threaten our food supply, destroy our natural resources, and cost the United States billions of dollars. How do they spread and cause so much harm? They do so through the everyday actions of people everywhere, who don't realize they are helping to spread these invasive pests and diseases.

As a respected leader and educator, you can help stop the spread of these hungry pests by incorporating **Leave Hungry Pests Behind** activities into your outdoor, scouting, or summer program!

- The enclosed activities are ready to use and offer an easy way to engage youth in various venues.
- Kids will learn about the threat of invasive species in fun, interactive ways and become partners in preventing their spread.

In learning how invasive species move around and spread, kids can share this knowledge with family and friends—and be leaders in helping to stop the threat. And by using these activities with your campers, scouts, and students, you will play a major role in helping to **Leave Hungry Pests Behind**.

We thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Greg Rosenthal  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



## LEAVE HUNGRY PESTS BEHIND!



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Program Aid No. 2146 • Issued September 2013



The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an  
equal opportunity provider and employer.

# EXPLORE! "CRITTER JAM"

**Activity Overview:** In this musical activity, kids will create raps, rhymes, or songs to communicate the facts about invasive species and the pathways they use to travel and spread. Kids will then share their musical creations with the rest of their peers, campers, or community to share their knowledge in a memorable way. (SMALL GROUP—Indoor)

**Time Needed:** 60 minutes

**Supplies:** Scrap paper, pencils (optional: radio, access to Internet, or MP3 player for music)

**Preparation:** Visit [www.hungrypests.com/how-they-spread](http://www.hungrypests.com/how-they-spread) for more information on the pest pathways

## Activity Steps:

1. Explain that **Vin Vasive** is on the loose and wreaking havoc! He is the "spokesperson" of the invasive species that threaten our trees, crops, and environment. But there are simple things we can all do to help prevent the spread of hungry pests.
2. Divide kids into small groups and provide each group with scrap paper and writing instruments. Explain that they will create a rap, rhyme, or song to convey important facts about invasive species. They may create an original melody or beat or change the lyrics to a popular song. Each musical creation must include at least 10 lines and communicate the following:
  - a. Pathways: How hungry pests travel and spread
  - b. The Threat: What damage hungry pests cause
  - c. The Impact: How the threat impacts our lives
  - d. A Call to Action: What we can each do to stop hungry pests
3. Share the facts with kids to get started (see below). Give each group 20 minutes to brainstorm and come up with key words to use. Then have them create their raps, rhymes, or songs. If possible, provide access to radio, MP3 players, or Internet for musical resources.
4. Give each group 10 minutes to rehearse. If they have time, they can choreograph a dance or skit to go along with their musical number. Next, it's time to perform! Invite other campers, leaders, parents, or community members to attend!

## Hungry Pest Basics

### Pathways That Contribute to the Spread of Hungry Pests

- Firewood
- Camping/outdoor gear (boots, tents)
- Recreational vehicles (RVs)/trucks (tires)
- Outdoor furniture
- Agricultural materials (hay, sod, farm equipment)
- Internet sales of agricultural products
- Plants and plant parts
- Luggage holding plants, fruits, or vegetables

### What's at Risk and How That Can Impact Us

Crops – the cost and availability of grapes, melons, orange juice

Trees – our use of tree houses, baseball bats, maple syrup

Natural resources – our enjoyment of forests, parks

### Call to Action Examples

Don't move firewood! Keep it clean! Clean your boots, tires, and tents! Think before you pack! Speak up!

Declare that fruit, or beware! Plant carefully! (Visit [www.hungrypests.com/what-you-can-do](http://www.hungrypests.com/what-you-can-do) for more information.)

# CREATE! “MASKED VIN VASIVE”

**Activity Overview:** In this creative arts activity, kids will build masks of hungry pests to identify various invasive species by what they look like. Use these masks in “**Attack of the Invasive Species**” (see next page) or in dramatic play. (INDIVIDUAL—Indoor)

**Time Needed:** 60 minutes

**Supplies:** Scrap paper, colored construction paper, colored pencils/markers/ crayons, string or yarn, tape or glue, scissors, stapler, pipe cleaners, other decorative items

**Preparation:** Download and print a variety of pest profiles featured on [www.hungrypests.com/the-threat](http://www.hungrypests.com/the-threat) (for example: Mexican fruit fly, Asian longhorned beetle, European gypsy moth, or giant African snail). See what kinds of pathways they use to sneak around the United States by visiting [www.hungrypests.com/how-they-spread](http://www.hungrypests.com/how-they-spread).

## Activity Steps:

1. Let kids spend some time looking at the hungry pest profiles. Encourage them to choose a pest they are interested in learning more about.
2. Ask them to think about pests and observe: *What do they look like? What shape, size, and color are they?* Ask them to think about their hungry pest’s eyes, nose, mouth, ears, arms, legs, wings, and other features. What colors, shapes, and other items can they add to their mask to make it look more like their pest? Is there a feature they want to exaggerate? Have kids sketch ideas for their mask on scrap paper.
3. Next, have them trace the outline shape of their mask on construction paper and then cut it out. They should make two holes for their own eyes (although the pest’s eyes may be wider apart or even on top of its head!).
4. Provide kids with art supplies to finish decorating their masks. Put on the final touch by stapling or knotting and then taping a piece of string or yarn to both sides of their masks.
5. Now it’s time to get into character! Have kids think about the movement and behaviors of their pests. *Ask: How do they move? Do they move quickly or slowly? Do they fly? What do they eat? Where do they live and like to hide?*

## Step Up the Challenge!

Use papier-mâché to create your masks or to build 3D models of invasive species. Display and place them around the campgrounds or in your environment where pests may naturally like to hide, or next to pathways such as plants, bicycles, lawn furniture, or a fruit basket!

**THE ESTIMATED COST OF TREATING, REMOVING, AND REPLACING 37.9 MILLION ASH TREES IN URBAN AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS IN 25 STATES IS \$25 BILLION.**



**GIANT AFRICAN SNAILS (GAS) WERE DETECTED IN 2011. THEY CAN FEED ON 500 KINDS OF PLANTS AND LAY 1,200 EGGS EACH YEAR, A RECIPE FOR EXPLOSIVE GROWTH AND EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.**



# MOVE! “ATTACK OF THE INVASIVE SPECIES!”

**Activity Overview:** This active “tag-like” game can be played in an indoor gym or outdoors in a playground, park, or large campground. It gets kids to move while thinking and learning about how pests like to travel and what they can do to prevent their spread. (GROUP—Indoor/Outdoor)

**Time Needed:** 20+ minutes

**Supplies:** Color flags, pinnies/scrimmage vests, or T-shirts, a variety of pest pathways (boots, garden plants, firewood, backpacks, fresh produce, tires, hay, lawn furniture, bicycles, foreign souvenirs, barbecue grill, trailers, tents)

**Preparation:** Place pest pathways in different locations over the playing field.

## Activity Steps:

1. Divide kids into two teams: Invasive Species and Nature Protectors. Give them colored flags, pinnies/ scrimmage vests, or T-shirts to wear in their teams. For the first round, delegate two-thirds of the group to be on the Invasive Species team. Before starting the game, ask kids to identify all of the pest pathways they can see.
2. To play the game, Nature Protectors must tag Invasive Species before they reach a pathway. Once Invasive Species reach a pathway, they are safe. They can keep moving from pathway to pathway as the game progresses. If tagged, the Invasive Species turn into Nature Protectors. Nature Protectors can eliminate one pathway for every three Invasive Species that they catch.
3. The game ends at time, after all Invasive Species have been caught, or once all pathways are eliminated. Play again and again!

## Step Up the Challenge!

- Play the game with obstacles (among trees, shrubs, or in a playground) or over a wider area. If space is limited, or if playing indoors with a large group, assign a few students to act as natural obstacles.
- Add a rule that Nature Protectors have to walk while Invasive Species can run.

“SO MUCH TO CHEW ON!  
I MEAN...  
THINK ABOUT.”



**GORGING THEMSELVES ON LEAVES, GYPSY MOTH CATERpillARS DEFOLIATE, WEAKEN, AND CAN KILL MORE THAN 300 DIFFERENT SPECIES OF TREES AND SHRUBS.**

For more information, visit

