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# Don't Move Gypsy Moth



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*Cover photo:* When inspecting outdoor household articles, check inside tubular items, like lawn furniture, ladders, and swingsets. Probe the tubes or flush them with hot water or another killing agent.

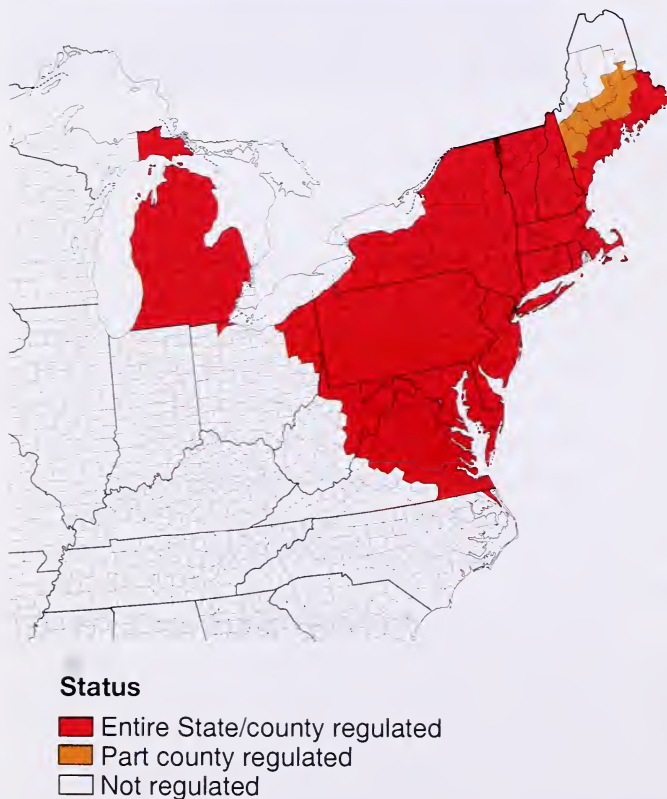
*Photo credits:* The cover photograph and figures 3–10 were taken by USDA photographer Perry Rech.

Revised December 1994

## Don't Move an Old Pest to a New Neighborhood

Planning to move from a State infested with gypsy moth to one that is not infested? You need to know about a regulation intended to prevent the inter-state 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 (USDA) has revised its gypsy moth quarantine regulations to require that such articles be inspected for all gypsy moth life stages prior to movement outside of the generally infested area. As shown in figure 1, this includes most of the northeastern part of the United States.



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**Figure 1**—Parts of the United States currently regulated for the presence of gypsy moth.

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



**Figure 2**—Gypsy moth caterpillars survive in high numbers in North America because here, unlike Europe, they don't have many natural enemies.

People glad to be leaving the annoyance of living with the gypsy moth took egg masses along unintentionally—to hatch and spread far from their old neighborhood. Millions of Federal and State tax dollars have been spent in recent years to limit the movement of these pests and to eradicate the isolated infestations that have been established in previously uninfested areas. In short, the gypsy moth will not be a welcome addition to your new neighborhood.

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.

## Two Ways To Inspect for Gypsy Moth

You are responsible for making sure that your outdoor items don't move the gypsy moth. How you do this is your decision. The quarantine regulations allow for self-inspection, and this pamphlet was developed to assist you if you choose to self-inspect. Alternatively, you may pay a USDA-trained certified pesticide applicator to inspect the articles you plan to move.

Officials with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) work with the States in monitoring anyone who moves outdoor household articles out of the regulated area. These officials check to see if people who are moving have a document certifying that their outdoor household articles have been properly inspected and found to be free of gypsy moth. If they don't have a certificate, the movement of the outdoor household articles constitutes a violation of the quarantine. Appropriate action, including the assessment of civil penalties, may be taken against the owner of the infested household goods.

## **Professional Inspection**

Participating State-licensed pesticide applicators are trained to inspect your 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.

This certificate will satisfy the requirements of all uninfested States and will relieve you of liability should your items be reinspected by a State official in the destination State and be found to harbor gypsy moth. The certificate must be issued prior to the movement of the outdoor articles and within 5 days of your departure during the period of active egg laying (June through August).

You may find pesticide applicators who are participating in the program through local advertising. You also may contact one of the information sources listed in this publication for a list of participating applicators.



## Self-Inspection

If you decide 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.

The checklist on the back cover of this brochure lists common outdoor household articles that could carry gypsy moth life stages. Carefully examine each article, remove any life stages found, and check the item off the list. Be sure to enter the date and place inspected and sign at the bottom. This will be your official certificate of self-inspection. Include this list with the paperwork accompanying your move.



**Figure 3**—Don't overlook children's toys that have been left outdoors. Gypsy moth egg masses can turn up almost anywhere.

## How To Recognize Gypsy Moth Life Stages

If you choose to inspect your outdoor articles, you need to be able to identify gypsy moth life stages. Most important is the egg mass. This publication contains photographs to help you.

The gypsy moth 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 outdoor household articles. 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 an inch and a half long and three-quarters of an inch wide (roughly between the size of a dime and a quarter).



**Figure 4**—Gypsy moth adult female with egg mass.

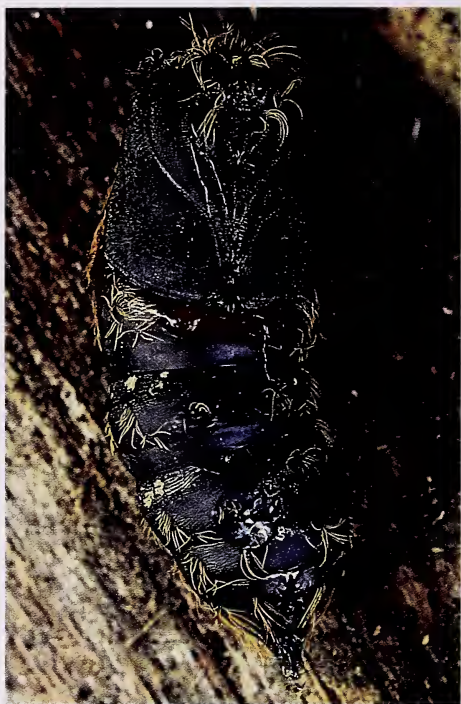


**Figure 5**—Gypsy moth adult male.

In Southern States, eggs begin hatching in late March. Hatch starts around early May in the northernmost 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. These caterpillars are voracious feeders and, in sufficient numbers, are capable of devouring all the leaves from the trees and plants in entire neighborhoods and forests.

Caterpillars stop feeding when they enter the pupal or “cocoon” stage, ranging from May in Southern States to early July in Northern 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.



**Figure 6**—Gypsy moth pupa.



**Figure 7**—Gypsy moth caterpillar.

## 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. You may elect to abandon articles if they are heavily infested and of little value to you.

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.



**Figure 8**—Be sure to check items that are stored in areas accessible to gypsy moths, like garages, storage sheds, and under porches or tarps.



**Figure 9**—If you find gypsy moth egg masses, scrape them into a container of hot water, household bleach, ammonia, or kerosene.

Depending on the time of year, you may have to protect your articles from reinfestation by caterpillars or moths after inspection. The best way to do this is to store the articles inside. During the time of year when these life stages are present, do not conduct the inspection more than 5 days prior to your departure.

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



**Figure 10**—Many items can be easily freed of gypsy moth life stages. Others, like the insides of vehicle wheels, can be very difficult to inspect properly.

## **Additional Information**

If you need additional information about the Federal regulations on moving outdoor household articles, contact one of the following:

- Your State's regulatory officials, usually listed under department of agriculture, plant protection or regulatory division, in the State government section of your telephone directory.
- A Federal regulatory official, listed in the Federal Government section of your telephone directory under USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine.
- Your county's agriculture extension agent, listed in the Federal Government section of your telephone directory under USDA, Extension Service.
- A local commercial moving company. Movers have been cooperating with USDA to be sure that the Federal regulations about gypsy moth are followed.



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

## Household Items

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

## Building Materials

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

### **Yard and Garden Items**

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

### **Children's Playthings**

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

### **Other Items**

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

Please inspect anything that was stored outside!

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_