

The Gypsy Moth

Do we have gypsy moth in New Zealand?

In March (2003), Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry's (MAF) nationwide early warning trapping system caught its first ever gypsy moth in Hamilton. Since then, MAF have been on full alert checking for any other signs of the pest. To date (April 2003), no other gypsy moths have been found, however there is still a risk of a pest like this spreading.

Why do we need your help to stop gypsy moth from establishing in New Zealand?

Gypsy moth is one of the more serious pests that threaten New Zealand's shores every year. That's why MAF maintains an early warning trapping system to make sure we find any of the moths before they establish here.



Left: Tim Tigner, Virginia Department of Forestry, www.invasive.org
Right: Mark Robinson, USDA Forest Service, www.invasive.org

Gypsy moth has the ability to increase in numbers over time and feed on a wide range of trees and shrubs, if left untreated. Small populations may build to large infestations causing widespread defoliation (leaf loss), weakening and sometimes killing of trees.

Defoliated forests are susceptible to disease, fire, and erosion and provide a poor environment for other forms of plant and animal life. Defoliation reduces the visual, recreational and economic value of forests, bush, parks and gardens.



Above: USDA APHIS PPQ Archives, USDA APHIS PPQ, www.invasive.org
Right: USDA APHIS PPQ Archives, USDA APHIS PPQ, www.invasive.org

Large populations of gypsy moth can become a nuisance by crawling over buildings, vehicles, roads and outdoor furniture. Some people may suffer allergic reactions when they come in contact with hairs from the caterpillar.

Gypsy moth has caused serious problems in North America - defoliating millions of acres of trees and shrubs - since it arrived there in the mid 1800s.

How can gypsy moth spread?

Gypsy moth populations can spread in several ways. Adult moths can fly large distances. The wind can blow newly hatched caterpillars to new areas on their silken threads.

In addition, people can accidentally transport egg masses and other life stages. The egg masses are tolerant of extreme temperatures and moisture and travel well on logs, outdoor furniture and plants.



Above: Tim Tigner, Virginia Department of Forestry, www.invasive.org

See it... Contain it... Report it...

How you can help stop gypsy moth from establishing in New Zealand.

See it...

- Be on the look out for signs of gypsy moth - particularly when you are handling vegetation from your property.
- The gypsy moth passes through 4 life stages - you are most likely to find egg masses, larvae (caterpillar) or adult moth.

Contain it...

- If you think you have found a gypsy moth, put the pest in a bag. Be careful to avoid coming into direct contact with the hairs of the caterpillar which may give you a rash.
- You can also make sure you don't accidentally spread the pest, by not moving vegetation out of the Hamilton District. If you wish to dispose of vegetation you should take it to:
 - Hamilton Refuse Transfer Station, Lincoln Street, Frankton
 - Hamilton Organic Recycling Centre, Wickham Street, Frankton
- If you want to move vegetation out of the Hamilton district call 0800 809 966

Report it...

- Call 0800 809 966 immediately if you think you have found a gypsy moth. You will be asked some questions to help identify the pest and a MAF contractor may visit you.
- Make sure your friends, colleagues and families who live in the Hamilton District, know what to look for and what to do if they think they have found a gypsy moth.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR GYPSY MOTH

EGG MASS

Egg masses which contain 50-800 eggs, may be attached to trees, walls, logs or outdoor equipment. The velvety egg masses are covered with a yellow fuzz and are usually about 3 cm long and 1.5 cm wide.



William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International, www.invasive.org

LARVAE

The larvae (caterpillars) are about 7 cm long and are dark and hairy. They have two rows of dots along their back - 5 pairs of blue and 6 of red.



USDA APHIS PPQ Archives, USDA APHIS PPQ, www.invasive.org

MOTH

The large moths have a wingspan of about 5cm. The males are brown and the females nearly white. They have wavy dark bands across their forewings.



Left: James A. Canopy, Virginia Department of Forestry, www.invasive.org
Right: USDA APHIS PPQ Archives, USDA APHIS PPQ, www.invasive.org

The information contained in this fact sheet was correct at the time of printing (April 2003).

To find out more information visit www.maf.govt.nz/gypsy-moth



Protect New Zealand
Tiakina Aotearoa
www.protectnz.org.nz

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New Zealand from pests and diseases