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Asian gypsy moth

Biosecurity



The Asian gypsy moth is native to China and Far-East Russia and is commonly found in Korea and Japan. Australia is free from the Asian gypsy moth and we want to keep it that way.

What the Asian gypsy moth looks like

Adult males are a grey-brown colour with a wingspan of 30 to 40 millimetres. Females are pale yellow with dark brown markings and have a wingspan of 40 to 70 millimetres. Adult females can fly up to 40 kilometres which greatly increase the chances of the species spreading.

Asian gypsy moth egg masses are covered in yellowish scales, about 40 x 20 millimetres in size and can contain more than 1000 eggs.

The freshly hatched hairy larvae can spin silk threads helping them balloon (drift on air currents) for up to eight kilometres if weather conditions are right. Later stages of larvae vary in colour, but have two distinctive rows of large spots along the back – usually five pairs of blue and six pairs of red from head to tail.

What to look for

Asian gypsy moth egg masses are tolerant of extremes in temperature and moisture. They are commonly found on ship hulls and rigging, cargo containers and vehicles.

The risk to Australia

The Asian gypsy moth represents a major biosecurity risk because the caterpillars feed on the leaves of more than 600 species of trees, such as oak, birch, aspen, eucalyptus, holly, rose, fruit trees and ornamental plants. The spread of Asian gypsy moth could have devastating effects to Australia's commercial and horticultural industries.



Images

1. Asian gypsy moth egg mass being removed from a ship.
2. Egg mass and comparative size to a five cent coin.
3. Adult Asian gypsy moth.

Note: Images are not to size.

What to do if you find any suspect Asian gypsy moths

SEE. SECURE. REPORT.

If you see any suspect egg masses or larvae in or around an incoming ship or imported goods, secure the goods to limit the movement of the insects where possible and immediately report it to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on 1800 798 636.

For safety consult a Department of Agriculture and Water Resources entomologist before handling specimens.



Contact
 Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
 1800 798 636 (free call in Australia)



For more information
agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/report

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