

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture**  
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# Fact Sheet 1

## Frequently Asked Questions About gypsy moth in the North Shore Area

### ***Why is there a concern on the North Shore of Minnesota?***

- During the summer of 2005, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) *Gypsy Moth monitoring program* discovered a substantial number of male moths on the North Shore, some of which were in the Superior National Forest. This increase in "catches", compared to previous years' monitoring, indicates that the gypsy moth invasion is moving westward and may become established in the North Shore area.
- A high percentage of the forest along the north shore is composed of aspen and birch trees. Birch and aspen are among the favored tree species that gypsy moth larva feed upon.

### ***What are gypsy moths?***

- Gypsy moths are among America's most destructive, non- native invasive insect pests.
- Once a gypsy moth population becomes established, it can spread and invade nearby areas. Female gypsy moths can lay one egg mass that can produce up to 1,000 caterpillars. Where a single egg mass is found there may be hundreds hidden.
- One gypsy moth caterpillar can eat up to one square foot of leaves a day, ruining backyard trees and forests, and disrupting commerce, and outdoor activities.
- Gypsy moth caterpillars may eat all the leaves off trees and shrubs, severely weakening them, making them vulnerable to other pests and diseases which may kill them.
- Sudden die-off of trees in a large area may result in changes to stream flow, sediment and channel shape.
- Female gypsy moths cannot fly. **They deposit their eggs on or near trees, on picnic tables, in car wheel wells, on campers, on boats, on grills, and on any outdoor household article or lawn ornament.**
- When these objects are moved from an infested area, the gypsy moth eggs 'hitchhike' to other areas, hence the name gypsy moth. This invasive insect is now threatening to establish itself in one of Minnesota's prime resources.
- Gypsy moths were introduced into the U.S. in 1869 by a French scientist living in Massachusetts. A few years later an outbreak occurred. The destructive pest established itself in the northeast coast and has hitchhiked all the way into eastern Wisconsin.

***How do gypsy moths affect us?***

- Sensitive people may form respiratory ailments and rashes from the shedding of caterpillar skins and hairs
- The gypsy moth is a serious threat to our economy, such as timber and tourism industries, and health and the environment.
- Property values may be affected if gypsy moth becomes an infestation homeowners must pay to apply pesticides or remove and replace trees.
- Caterpillar droppings, called frass, pile up and may pollute water running into streams.
- Natural ecosystems may be disturbed from high populations of gypsy moth which may out-compete native species.
- Gypsy moth may make outdoor activities unpleasant due to the many caterpillars crawling on trees that are shedding skin and hairs, and dropping frass to the ground. Frass also emits an odor.

***What is being done about gypsy moth?***

- The gypsy moth is a federally regulated pest.
- The USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine ensures people comply with regulations when they move materials out of areas quarantined for gypsy moth.
- Minnesota state statute provides MDA with regulatory authority for terrestrial invasive pests, which includes gypsy moth survey and eradication, in Minnesota.
- The USDA Forest Service has a responsibility to protect forests from gypsy moth damage and to protect neighbors by minimizing spread.
- The national Slow the Spread Foundation is working collaboratively with the MDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA Forest Service- Northeast Area State and Private Forestry and the Superior National Forest to slow the spread of the gypsy moth along the north shore.
- The USDA Forest Service is preparing an environmental assessment which will describe proposed alternatives to manage gypsy moth on the north shore. The Superior National Forest expects to provide a proposal in February 2005 for public comment.

***For the latest*** on gypsy moth monitoring, results, treatments, and brochures call the **Arrest the Pest Hotline** at **651-296-MOTH (6684)** or **1-888-545-MOTH (6684)**

or

visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture/Gypsy Moth Trapping Program website at: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/invasives/gypsymoth.htm>

***For more information about the Environmental Assessment contact:***

Superior National Forest at 218-626-4300 [www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior)

The proposed Gypsy Moth treatment is a joint effort with The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and Superior National Forest and the Gypsy Moth Slow-the-Spread Project