



**Exotic pest**

- Native to Europe and Asia
- Introduced to North America in 1869 near Boston
- Distribution ranges from Maine south to Virginia and northwest through Wisconsin
- Well established in eastern and central Wisconsin and is spreading westward

**Damage**

- Caterpillars feed on the leaves of up to 500 species of trees and shrubs, favoring oak
- May defoliate several million acres in the United States during the summer months
- Defoliated trees grow a new set of leaves, but are weakened and may be killed by other pests
- The first defoliation occurred in Wisconsin in 1999

**Impact on people**

- Expense to homeowners and communities of removing and replacing dead trees
- Potential decline in property values from tree loss
- Allergic reactions to caterpillar hair
- Nuisance

**Costs to businesses**

- Inspections and treatments for nursery and Christmas tree growers, timber interests, and paper companies shipping materials to non-infested areas
- Lost recreation dollars
- Environmental damage

**Life cycle**

- Caterpillars emerge from late April to late May and begin feeding
- Stop feeding and pupate, forming a cocoon-like shell in late June to mid-July
- Adult moths emerge from pupae, mate and die in mid-July to early August
- Eggs over-winter in an egg mass, protected in a blanket of the female moth's hair

**Rapid spread**

- Each female lays an average of 600 eggs in an egg mass
- Gypsy moths thrive in many habitats because they are not picky eaters
- Because they're not native to North America, they have few natural enemies
- Egg masses are often moved long distances and into new areas on firewood, vehicles, tree trimmings, and other outdoor items

**Goals of Wisconsin  
Cooperative Gypsy  
Moth Program**

- The DNR "Suppression" Program aims to reduce high gypsy moth populations to prevent defoliation in established areas and facilitate federal cost sharing for the suppression treatments
- The Dept. of Agriculture "Slow the Spread" Program aims to delay the establishment of gypsy moth in the western part of the state and to eradicate isolated populations there

**For more information, call 1-800-642-MOTH  
or visit Wisconsin Gypsy Moth on the Web at <http://gypsymoth.wi.gov>**