

Lymantria dispar

The Insect

Lymantria dispar is an insect native to Europe and Asia and was introduced to North America in the mid-19th century. The caterpillar is the source of defoliation on more than 500 species of trees, making it a threat to trees¹. The common name of ‘gypsy moth’ was discontinued in June of 2021 for its derogatory nature.

Preferred Hosts

- Oak
- Aspen
- Linden
- Paper birch
- River birch
- Hawthorn
- Mountain-ash
- Willow
- Ironwood
- Apple
- Serviceberry²

Keeping Trees Healthy

Gypsy moth defoliation is an added stress that can lead to pests and diseases killing a tree. Keeping trees healthy is an important preventative measure². Water and mulch trees regularly to increase vigor. Avoid wounding oaks between April and October and protect the critical root zone from lawn mowers and other tools³.



Adult gypsy moth shown with egg mass and a shed caterpillar skin (2).



Caterpillar shows five pairs of blue dots followed by six pairs of red (2).

Implications for Minnesota

Many of the trees affected are common in urban landscapes and forests. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is actively planning preventative measures to slow the gypsy moth spread and has a quarantine in place for affected counties².

Management & Control Considerations

- Mating disruption through the use of pheromones
- Insecticidal control (used on a smaller scale)
- Parasitic wasps frequently target gypsy moth eggs and larva
- Viral and fungal pathogens that specifically affect gypsy moth but are dependent on weather conditions or are manufactured in limited quantities³

Sources

- 1) <https://www.fs.fed.us/ne/morgantown/4557/gmoth/>
- 2) <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialanimals/gypsymoth/impacts.html>
- 3) <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialanimals/gypsymoth/management.html>
- 4) <https://www.entsoc.org/entomological-society-america-discontinues-use-gypsy-moth-ant-names>