



What are Hungry Pests?

Invasive pests are any damaging insects or other animals, plants or plant diseases not native to an area. These “hungry pests” have few or no natural enemies and feed upon or infect trees and plants in our farms, forests, parks and backyard gardens. They disrupt ecosystems and damage crops and landscaping. These pests have cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars and can even negatively impact public health. For example, the giant African snail can carry a parasite known to cause meningitis in humans.

USDA has spotlighted 18 hungry and destructive pests: Asian citrus psyllid, Asian longhorned beetle, citrus greening disease, coconut rhinoceros beetle, emerald ash borer, European grapevine moth, European gypsy moth, false codling moth, giant African snail, imported fire ant, Khapra beetle, light brown apple moth, Mediterranean fruit fly, Mexican fruit fly, old world bollworm, Oriental fruit fly, spotted lanternfly and sudden oak death. More information about each can be found in the “Hungry Pests in USDA's Crosshairs” fact sheet and on www.HungryPests.com.

“Leave Hungry Pests Behind”

“Leave Hungry Pests Behind” is the name of a national, multi-media consumer education campaign created to bring awareness to the public about the invasive pests that most threaten America’s agricultural crops, trees and other plants. The initiative was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) / Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), with the support of state partners, which include state departments of agriculture. Hungry Pests' purpose is to inform the public on ways to prevent the spread of invasive pests and solicit their help in reporting them. Elements of the outreach effort include national television and radio public service announcements (PSAs) in English and Spanish, media and public relations outreach, stakeholder engagement, online advertising, Hungry Pests Facebook and Twitter pages, and a website, www.HungryPests.com.

Ways the Public Can Help

People are the primary cause of the spread of Hungry Pests – most often unintentionally – by bringing them from another country or transporting them within the U.S. in the things they move and pack. Fortunately, people can also be the solution to slow or help stop their spread. Here’s what the public can do to help:

- **Buy Local, Burn Local.** Invasive pests and larvae can hide and ride long distances in firewood. Don't give them a free ride to start a new infestation – buy firewood where you burn it. If you must move firewood (even just a short distance), make sure it has been heat-treated to kill any pests that might have been in or on it.
- **Plant Carefully.** Buy your plants from a reputable source and avoid using invasive plant species at all costs.
- **Do Not Bring or Mail** fresh fruits, vegetables or plants into your state or another state unless agricultural inspectors have cleared them beforehand.

- **Cooperate** with any agricultural quarantine restrictions and allow authorized agricultural workers access to your property for pest or disease surveys.
- **Keep it Clean.** Wash outdoor gear and tires between fishing, hunting or camping trips. Clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items when moving from one home to another.
- **Learn to Identify.** If you see signs of an invasive pest or disease, write down or take a picture of what you see, and then report it at www.HungryPests.com.
- **Speak Up.** Declare all agricultural items to customs officials when returning from international travel. Call USDA to find out what's allowed:
 - (301) 851-2046 for questions about plants.
 - (301) 851-3300 for questions about animals.
 - Go to www.aphis.usda.gov/travel/ to learn more.

Federal Actions

In addition to the consumer outreach described above, the USDA and its partners are fighting Hungry Pests on three fronts:

- **Abroad**
 - Assisting other countries in their pest and disease survey, control, suppression and/or eradication efforts.
 - Inspecting certain U.S.-bound exports to ensure they are pest- and disease-free, before they depart.
 - Helping other countries to develop the capability to export safe agricultural products to the United States.
- **At the Border**
 - Establishing import regulations and international standards to keep out foreign animal and plant pests and diseases, as well as harmful weeds.
 - Working with other countries to develop science-based standards through the International Plant Protection Convention. For example, wood-packaging material that could be carrying tree-killing beetles must now be treated and marked with an official international stamp.
 - Supporting agricultural inspections at U.S. ports of entry by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
 - Preventing the entry of smuggled agricultural goods.
- **Across the Homeland**
 - Working with state partners to conduct annual surveys across the country for invasive species.
 - Detecting pests and diseases early and responding rapidly to avoid large-scale agricultural, environmental and economic losses – and to keep our export markets open.
 - Informing the public about the risks of invasive species and teaching them how to protect America's natural beauty and agricultural bounty.

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