

Fact Sheet:

Asian Gypsy Moth

Lymantria dispar asiatica and *L.d.japonica*

Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM) is a proven invader and one of the most feared pests by temperate countries such as New Zealand. AGM is regularly intercepted at the New Zealand border on inanimate objects such as shipping containers, used cars and container ships. An incursion, or any change to New Zealand's status as AGM free, could result in significant market access restrictions for export industries such as kiwifruit.

Identification

Eggs are laid in the Northern Hemisphere between July and September on any sheltered structures, including shipping containers, used cars and shipping vessels.

Eggs are smaller than 1 mm in size and are normally in clusters of 200 – 1200 eggs.



AGM egg mass

When these eggs hatch, a 'ballooning' of new hatched larvae may be observed, with silken threads able to be carried 50m or more in the wind. Newly-hatched larvae are black. Older larvae have five pairs of raised blue spots and six pairs of raised brick-red spots along their backs.



AGM larvae

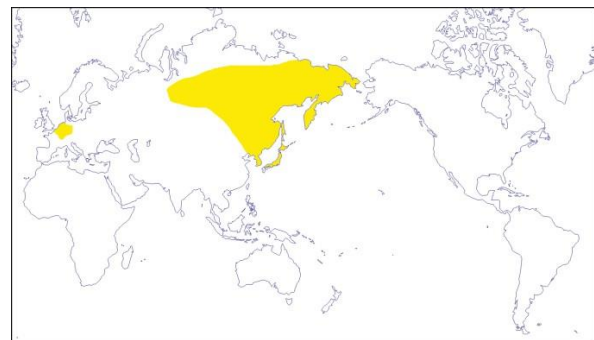
The male adult moth is grey-brown with a wingspan of 3-4 cm. The female is nearly all white with wavy black bands across the wing and a wingspan of about 9cm.



Adult moths; male (left) and female (right).

Distribution and climate range

AGM prefers a temperate climate and would favour New Zealand conditions if it managed to establish here. AGM is indigenous to China and Russia and has become established in Korea, Japan and Germany. Female moths frequently lay eggs on ships in Japan and Russia which can result in transportation of these eggs elsewhere. In 2008 AGM egg masses were detected on 23 ships from these countries bound for North America.



The global distribution of Asian gypsy moth is shown in yellow

Control

AGM is considered such a serious threat to New Zealand that it is one of only three horticultural pests (fruit fly and ants being the other) with an ongoing targeted surveillance programme. Established in 1992, the AGM surveillance programme uses over 1500 pheromone traps placed across the country to cover likely points of entry.

There has only been one post-border detection of AGM in New Zealand, in a Hamilton surveillance trap in 2003. This find resulted in a large-scale response with intensive pheromone trapping and aerial spraying. It wasn't until two years later that the pest was finally declared eradicated.

What should you do if you think you have seen this pest?

Phone MPI on 0800 80 99 66 or KVH on 0800 665 825.