



Our Insect Enemies



Invasive Pests In The Classroom

(NAPSA)—Don't look now, but invasive species are invading classrooms. That's the word from experts who say such pests have been popping up across America for decades.

In an effort to prevent further devastation, these pests can be found in a more unlikely place—school. The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) has introduced a new curriculum for 6th through 8th graders called "Hungry Pests Invade Middle School."

This instruction is critically important, because invasive pests—which are introduced to the United States from other countries—attack our plants, trees and agriculture. Since they have no natural enemies here, they can spread unchecked and are capable of wiping out entire native species, from ash trees—used to make furniture, flooring and baseball bats—to orange groves.

As a result, invasive species cost the U.S. an estimated \$120 billion a year. Unfortunately, these pests aren't going away anytime soon and future generations need to know how to protect the country's farmlands, forests and neighborhoods from them.

Students not only learn what invasive species are, but how they got here and the damage they cause. Most importantly, they learn how to prevent these "Hungry Pests" from spreading by taking preventive steps such as these:

- Don't move firewood; instead, buy firewood where you plan to burn it.
- Buy plants, including ones online, from reputable sources.
- Don't bring or mail fresh produce or plants out of one state or into another.



A new curriculum has been created to teach 6th through 8th graders about the dangers posed by invasive species.

- Declare plants and produce to customs officials when returning from international travel.
- Don't move plants or produce outside of quarantined areas.
- Wash dirt from outdoor gear and tires before going to/leaving from fishing, hunting or camping trips.
- Clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items before moving them to a new location.
- Report signs of invasive pests at www.HungryPests.com.

"The USDA's list of 18 Hungry Pests are different from other types of invasive species, because they are mostly spread by humans in the things they move and pack," said Abbey Powell, USDA-APHIS. "Through this curriculum, students can learn some of those ways and, hopefully, share that message with family and friends."

Teachers may access the curriculum, which meets National Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, free of charge at www.hungrypests.com/resources/educators.php.

To learn more, go to [Hungry Pests.com](http://HungryPests.com), or join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter.