

Our Insect Enemies

You Can Help Stop Invasive Pests

(NAPSA)—There's good news for those who enjoy outdoor activities. By taking a few simple steps, they can help protect the environment from invasive pests and the damage they can cause.

Many are surprised to learn that taking part in pastimes such as gardening, fishing, camping or hiking may actually harm the environment by spreading invasive pests.

Invasive species are any animals, insects, plants or diseases not native to an area. Because they don't have natural predators in place, they can spread unchecked, feeding on and destroying trees, plants and crops. Invasive pests not only wreak havoc on ecosystems, but cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars in losses.

The United States Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) has designated 15 invasive species as Hungry Pests. These are the invasive species most threatening to America and primarily spread through human activity.

For example, the Asian longhorned beetle has led to the destruction of millions of America's treasured hardwood trees, including maple. The European grapevine moth attacks mature grapes used to produce wine. The Asian citrus psyllid causes great damage to orange and other citrus groves, while the emerald ash borer has the potential to wipe out ash trees, a shade tree used in many parks and cities.

Steps You Can Take

There are several important steps you can take to stop the spread of invasive pests:



Many are surprised to learn that enjoying outdoor activities may spread invasive pests.

• **Outdoor Enthusiasts:** Don't move untreated firewood from one place to another, as invasive pests could be hidden inside. Wash outdoor gear and tires free of dirt and insects/eggs before leaving fishing, hunting or camping trips. Clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items before moving them to another location.

• **Gardeners:** Buy plants, including ones online, from reputable sources. Don't bring or mail fresh fruits, vegetables or plants into or out of your state unless agricultural inspectors have cleared them beforehand.

• **Travelers:** Declare all produce, plants and plant-based items to customs officials when returning from any foreign trip.

In addition, there are other things you can do to help stop Hungry Pests, such as report any signs of them at www.HungryPests.com. Also, respect any federal or state quarantines and allow agricultural inspectors access to your land, if requested.

Learn more about these invasive species and the ways you can help at www.HungryPests.com.