

**BAY COUNTY GYPSY MOTH  
SUPPRESSION PROGRAM**

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Community Initiatives  
Geographic Information Systems  
Gypsy Moth Suppression Program  
Mosquito Control  
Transportation Planning

**TOM HICKNER**

County Executive

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Gypsy Moth Caterpillars are Hatching**

Bay County Gypsy Moth Suppression Program staff have found a few gypsy moth egg masses that are now hatching. This is the earliest that staff members have noted a gypsy moth hatch throughout Bay County. The gypsy moth population is still extremely low, but if the eggs are present in your area you will be seeing the tiny 1/8th inch caterpillars crawling around. When they first hatch, the caterpillars climb to the highest point they can reach and wait for the wind to blow them to a new area and hopefully a suitable food source. This is called "ballooning" and is possible because the caterpillars have very long hairs on their bodies and they spin a silk line that lifts them on the wind much like a gossamer spider does in the fall. The caterpillars usually don't travel far in this manner, however it does allow them to spread out from the site where they were hatched. More often the egg mass is transported on something a human has moved for example firewood taken on a camping trip.

Other invasive and harmful insects that travel around in firewood are the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the Asian Long-horned Beetle. For this reason it is advised that everyone "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 feel the gypsy moth population on your property is increasing or you have questions concerning invasive insects, please call Alicia Wallace, Program Coordinator, at 989 895-4195 to assure that your area is surveyed.

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