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U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

(/)

Baltimore CBP Detects Nine Asian Gypsy Moth Egg Masses on Four Vehicle Carrier Vessels

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Also discover live destructive Khapra beetle in a shipping container

BALTIMORE – Being one of the nation’s busiest vehicle import ports provides regional economic vitality, but it also presents unique agricultural threats for Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists in Baltimore to mitigate.

CBP agriculture specialists recently had their hands full mitigating nine egg masses of the highly invasive Asian Gypsy Moth (AGM) that they discovered aboard four vehicle carrier vessels.

Agriculture specialists also intercepted a live Khapra beetle larvae, one of the world’s most destructive insect pests.

These interceptions included:

- Four suspected AGM egg masses discovered aboard the vehicle carrier *M/V Graceful Leader* on September 4. The vessel arrived after a July port call in Japan. On September 9, the USDA verified the egg masses as *Lymantria dispar asiatica/japonica* (AGM).
- One suspected AGM egg mass discovered aboard the vehicle carrier *M/V Hoegh Africa* on August 29. The vessel arrived after making June port calls to South Korea and China. On September 3, the USDA verified the egg mass as *Lymantria dispar asiatica/japonica* (AGM).
- One suspected live Khapra beetle larva and one cast skin on a container that arrived from Nigeria aboard the *M/V Grande Sierra Leone* on August 27. The container was shipped from Nigeria. On August 28, the USDA verified the specimen as *Trogoderma granarium Everts* (Khapra beetle).



CBP agriculture specialist scraping free an AGM egg mass.

- Two suspected AGM egg masses discovered aboard the vehicle carrier *M/V Hoegh Jacksonville* on August 27. The vessel arrived after a June port call to Japan. On September 1, the USDA verified the egg masses as *Lymantria dispar asiatica/japonica* (AGM).
- Two suspected AGM egg masses discovered aboard the vehicle carrier *M/V Figaro* on August 21. The vessel arrived after a June port call to Japan. On August 25, the USDA verified the egg masses as *Lymantria dispar asiatica/japonica* (AGM).

CBP agriculture specialists discovered the egg masses affixed to various parts of the four ships, scraped them clean and treated the areas with a pesticide spray.

“Vehicle carriers are large ships, so inspecting them is a tremendous task for Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists, but a very necessary mission to protect our regional agricultural industries from destructive, invasive pests,” said Casey Durst, Director of Field Operations for CBP’s Baltimore Field Office. “CBP remains steadfast in our commitment to vigilantly protect our nation’s agriculture every day against the extraordinary threat posed by invasive insects and highly pathogenic animal and plant diseases that threaten our economic security.”



Egg mass of the highly invasive and destructive Asian Gypsy Moth.

Asian Gypsy Moth and Khpara beetle are two of the most destructive insect pests in the world. Neither are known to occur in the United States.

According to the USDA, AGM poses a significant threat

(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/the-threat/asian-gypsy-moth/asian-gypsy-moth>) to our nation’s forests and urban landscapes. AGM are known to be extremely mobile -- females can travel up to 25 miles per day -- are attracted to lights, can lay egg masses that could yield hundreds of hungry caterpillars, and is itself a voracious eater that attacks more than 500 species of trees and plants.

According to the USDA, Khpara beetle is a destroyer of stored grains, cereals and seeds

(<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/the-threat/khpara-beetle/khpara-beetle>), and it presents a potentially damaging economic impact to United States grain and cereal exports if Khpara beetle was to establish in the U.S. It remains the only insect in which CBP takes regulatory action, even when the insect is in a dead state.

CBP agriculture specialists (</careers/frontline-careers/as>) have extensive training and experience in the biological sciences and agricultural inspection, inspect tens of thousands of international air passengers, and air and sea cargoes nationally being imported to the United States.

During a typical day last year, CBP agriculture specialists across the nation seized 4,695 prohibited plants, meats, animal byproducts, and soil, and intercepted 314 insect pests at U.S. ports of entry. See what else CBP achieved on a **typical day during 2019** (</newsroom/stats/typical-day-fy2019>).

CBP's **border security mission** ([/border-security](#)) is led at ports of entry by CBP officers from the Office of Field Operations. Visit **CBP Ports of Entry** ([/border-security/ports-entry](#)) to learn more about how CBP's Office of Field Operations secures our nation's borders. Learn more about CBP at [www.CBP.gov](#) (/).

Follow the Director of CBP's Baltimore Field Office on Twitter at [@DFOBaltimore](#) (<https://twitter.com/dfobaltimore>) and on Instagram at [@dfobaltimore](#) (<http://www.instagram.com/dfobaltimore/>) for breaking news, current events, human interest stories and photos.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with securing the borders of the United States while enforcing hundreds of laws and facilitating lawful trade and travel.

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