



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ASIAN GYPSY MOTH DETECTED IN SANTA CRUZ

A single Asian gypsy moth has been found in the City of Santa Cruz in a pest detection trap located at a residential property.

Pest detection traps are routinely deployed and inspected by Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner staff as part of a statewide pest detection program aimed at monitoring and preventing the spread of harmful pests in California. In response to the detection, additional traps are being set throughout the city and the surrounding region in a cooperative effort with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and the Agricultural Commissioner's office. The trapping array is designed to determine the presence and extent of any infestation.

If an infestation were to develop in the Santa Cruz region, Asian gypsy moth caterpillars would threaten nearby forests and local oaks as well as many other hardwoods, evergreens, manzanita, cottonwood, willow and other species. Asian gypsy moths are also a threat to agricultural crops such as fruit trees.

If additional detection efforts determine that a larger infestation exists, the USDA will convene a Technical Working Group of scientists and experts who will be charged with assessing the situation and determining next steps. Previous infestations in California and other states have been eradicated using an organic-approved treatment called Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki*), a naturally occurring bacteria found in soil. It has not yet been determined whether or what form of remediation would occur in Santa Cruz.

A female Asian gypsy moth can fly up to 25 miles and lay up to 1,500 eggs, making early detection of an infestation especially important. Asian gypsy moth



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caterpillars can eat up to one square foot of leaves per day, potentially feeding on hundreds of tree species.

The Asian gypsy moth's egg masses are frequently detected on ships and shipping containers inbound from Asia, Russia and other infested regions. Eggs are also known to be transported on outdoor furniture, recreational vehicles, firewood and other portable items.

Residents with questions or concerns about trapping activities are encouraged to call CDFA's Pest Hotline at 800-491-1899.