



Lymantria Species Common Names: A Brief Guide

In March 2023, ESA adopted common names for six species of moths in the genus *Lymantria*, following the previous adoption of “spongy moth” for *Lymantria dispar* in 2022.

Four of the species were often previously known by names using a “[descriptor] gypsy moth” construction, and all are closely related *Lymantria* species included on the 2023 national priority pest list through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program.

Adopted	Species	Common Name	Established in North America	Females Can Fly	Flighted Spongy Moth Complex
2022	<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	spongy moth	Varies	Varies	Varies
	<i>Lymantria dispar dispar</i>	spongy moth	Yes	No	No
	<i>Lymantria dispar asiatica</i>	spongy moth	No	Yes	Yes
	<i>Lymantria dispar japonica</i>	spongy moth	No	Yes	Yes
2023	<i>Lymantria albescens</i>	ivory spongy moth	No	Yes	Yes
	<i>Lymantria postalba</i>	white-winged spongy moth	No	Yes	Yes
	<i>Lymantria umbrosa</i>	shadow spongy moth	No	Yes	Yes
	<i>Lymantria mathura</i>	rosy tussock moth	No	Yes	No
	<i>Lymantria monacha</i>	black-arched tussock moth	No	Yes	No
	<i>Lymantria xyliina</i>	casuarina tussock moth	No	Yes	No

In December 2022, as one of several partner nations that regulate selected *Lymantria* species due to their high risk of dispersal via international trade, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service adopted the term “flighted spongy moth complex” for the group of species and subspecies *L. albescens*, *L. postalba*, *L. umbrosa*, *L. dispar asiatica*, and *L. dispar japonica*. This group was formerly referred to as Asian gypsy moths, or AGMs. Female moths in this group can fly, which differentiates them from the subspecies *L. dispar dispar* that is established in North America.

Three of the species with common names adopted in 2023 are included in the flighted spongy moth regulatory complex (shaded in yellow above). The three subspecies of *Lymantria dispar*, however, are not listed individually in ESA’s Common Names List. Rather, the name “spongy moth” applies to *Lymantria dispar* and all of its subspecies. In communicating about *L. dispar* and its subspecies, ESA recommends:

- When no distinction needed, use “spongy moth” for *L. dispar dispar*, *L. dispar asiatica*, or *L. dispar japonica*.
- When the key distinction regards female flight capability, “flighted spongy moth” or “member of the flighted spongy moth complex” is suitable for both *L. dispar asiatica* or *L. dispar japonica*.
- When distinction among the three subspecies is necessary, use “spongy moth” to refer to them collectively but use scientific names for the subspecies.

Learn More

For more info, including why these common names were selected, scan the QR code or visit entsoc.org/spongymoth.

