

Facts and guidance about *Obama nungara*,
also known as lövplattmask (SE) or
argentiinanlattana (FI)



Obama nungara flatworm

- Present in Guernsey, UK since 2008, subsequently found in France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands and Germany (2022, rapid spread with plant sales)
- Actual species identified in 2016
- No action taken initially
- Risk-assessed according to EU procedure in 2023
- First occurrence in Sweden: Malmö, November 2024
- By January it was subject to national emergency measures (EU Regulation article 10)
- Business sector quickly on board, taking the lead
- Added to the EU list from 7 August 2025



OBAMA CHEZ NOUS!



- Predatory flatworm from S America, introduced to EU through trade in plants
- Adults reach 5-8 cm in length and ca 5 mm width. (Indigenous flatworm species are smaller, lighter of colour and lack the multitude of eyes).The dorsal side is dark brown to beige with black longitudinal stripes. The underside is grey-beige. The egg cocoons are 5 mm, peppercorn sized, initially red and gradually dark brown. Each contains several juveniles.
- Lives off earthworms (preferred), snails, grubs, slugs and other flatworms.
- Present on the soil surface and in the upper layers, frequently found under bits of wood, stones and dead leaves. Mainly active after dusk.

WHAT TO DO?

From 7 January 2025 the *Obama* flatworm has been regulated in Sweden. The national emergency measures were superseded by the EU listing in August 2025, adding import and sale to the prohibitions. **So all intentional import, transport, holding, sale, spread and release into nature of this species is prohibited.**

A challenge with a plant stowaway...

- The businesses engaged early on, establishing search procedures and trialling eradications.
- Several research projects started up in early 2025, on the species ecology, pheromones (traps) and developing an electronic nose
- Massive communication efforts toward general public, including national radio and TV
- Gardening publications and NGO:s



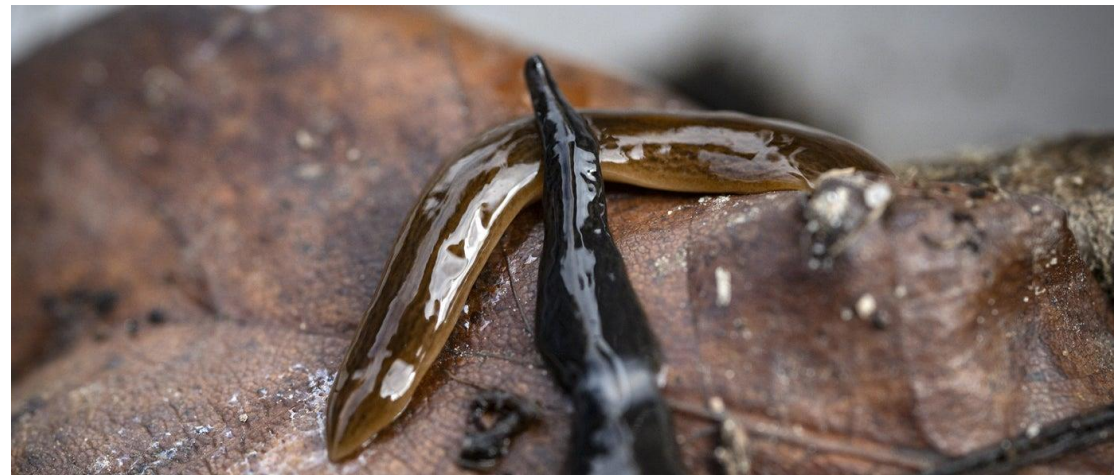


Regeringen vidtar åtgärder mot den invasiva plattmasken Obama nungara. Om arten etablerar sig i Sverige kan det få allvarliga konsekvenser. Foto: Jonas Roth

Regeringsbeslut: Nödåtgärder mot köttätande plattmasken Obama nungara

UPPDATERAD 10 DECEMBER 2024 | PUBLICERAD 5 DECEMBER 2024

Regeringen har beslutat att myndigheterna får vidta nödåtgärder för att motverka att den invasiva plattmasken Obama nungara får fäste i Sverige. Den köttätande masken upptäcktes för en tid sedan i [planteringar i Malmö](#).



Nyheter

Skräcklarmet: "Obama" överlevde vintern



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Uppdaterad 2025-03-10 | Publicerad 2025-03-07

+ Följ  Mejla

 Dela  Spara



SVIRONN

HOW TO CHECK IMPORTED PLANT MATERIAL

Bare-rooted material carries only limited risk. Mainly plant material originating from Europe seems to contain flatworms.

How to proceed:

- Place the plant material on a hardened surface or solid geotextile
- Check
 - The ground under the pot
 - The bottom outside of the pot
 - In and under trays/cases
- Lift the plant from the pot and check inside the pot as well as the root clump



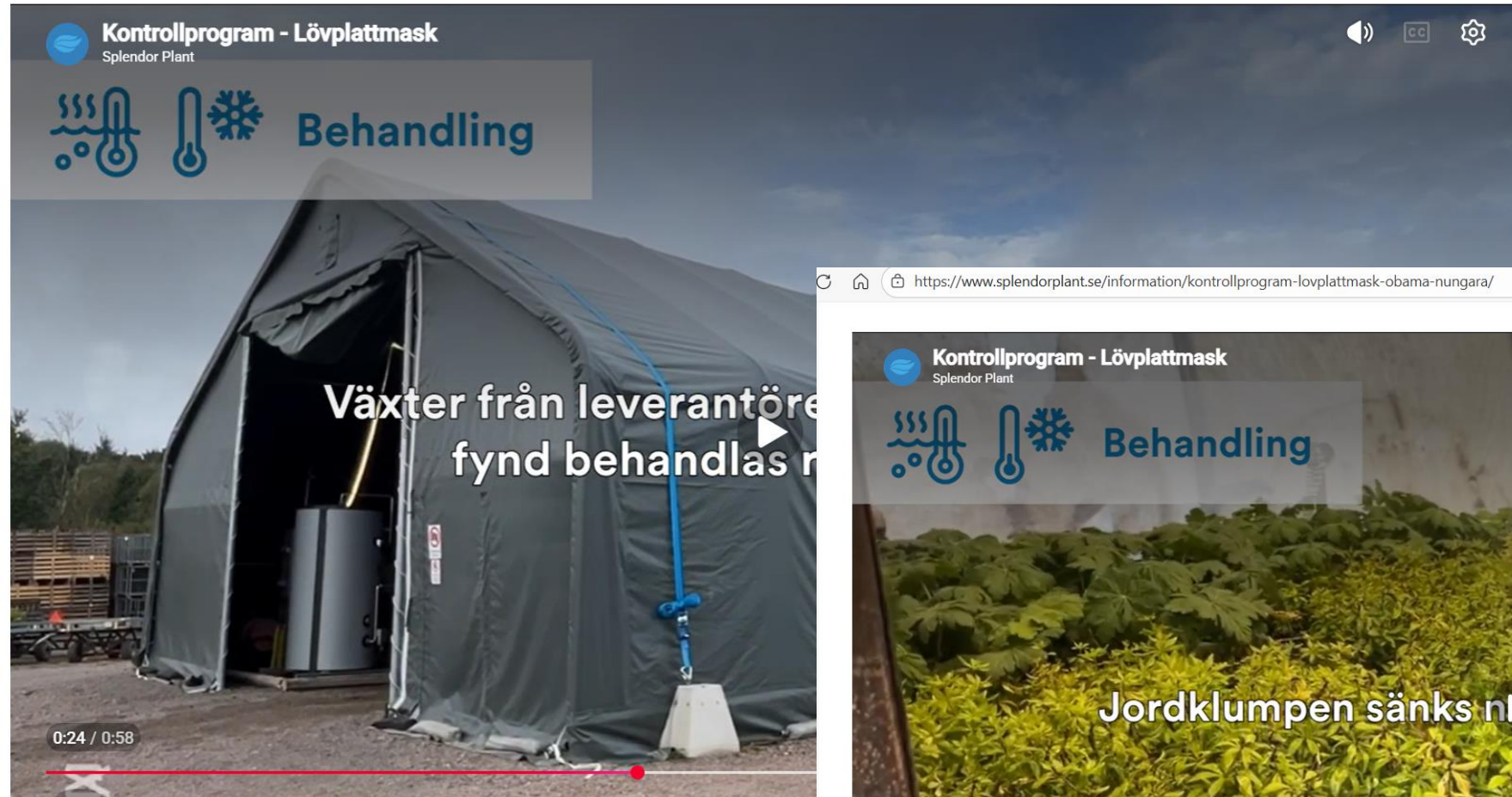
Use plastic gloves since the flatworm mucus contains skin irritants

Use a (head)lamp even in daylight, the mucus reflects the light and glimmers. The eggs are hard to discover, given their size and colour.

If worms are found, sanitize the whole batch by lowering into a 40 degree C water bath for 15 minutes. In winter, freezing to -4 overnight also works. Check with thermometer centrally in pot!



Example of an industrial-scale water bath



<https://www.splendorplant.se/information/kontrollprogram-lovplattmask-obama-nungara/>

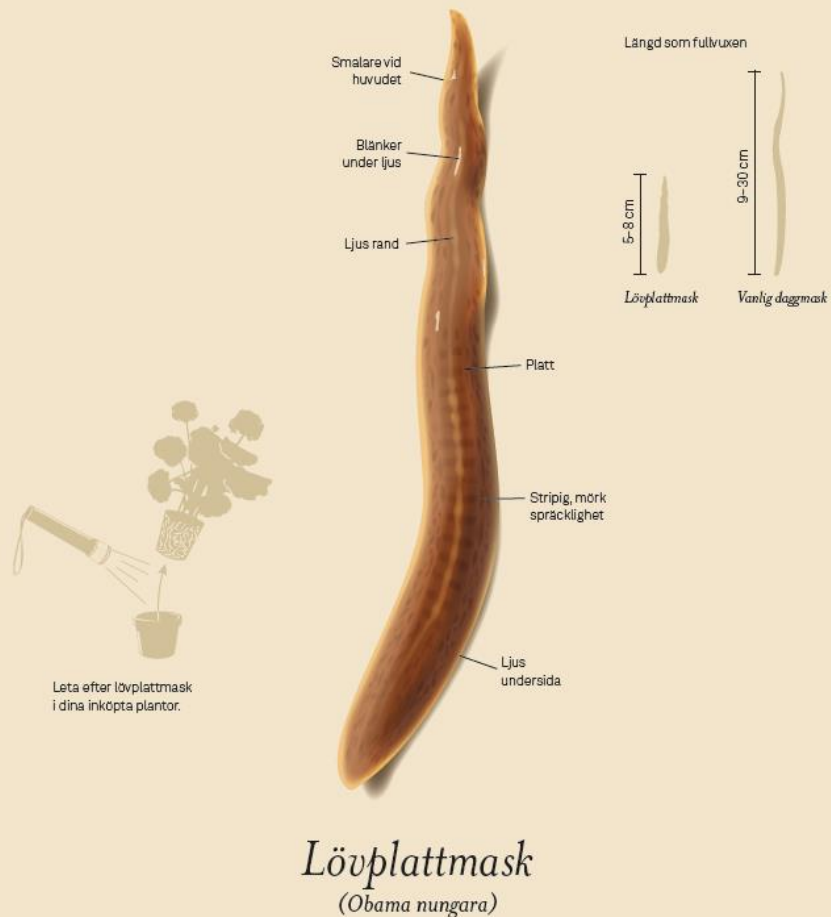


Okay, so we have a new flatworm out there. What is the problem?

- Preferential predation on earthworms
- Earthworms are crucial for soil fertility in Europe, hence vital for agriculture



INVASIVA ARTER PÅ LAND



En invasiv främmande art är en art som flyttats från sin ursprungliga miljö till en miljö där den sprider sig snabbt, tränger undan andra arter och hotar den biologiska mångfalden.

Lövplattmasken är en av de invasiva arter som vi i Sverige bekämpar och hindrar spridning av. Läs mer om lövplattmask på naturvardsverket.se.



- Preventive measures include importing businesses screening 30% of their imported material on-site
- Search dogs and visual search used
- On discovery, the whole batch is sanitized (freeze or heat)
- Some importers routinely sanitize everything from selected countries
- Contacts with exporters in Europe to curb the influx
- Contacts with authorities in other MS: awareness, knowledge and methods
- Municipalities investing in heated cargo containers for general public use

These are not flatworms

- **Slugs:** they have a mantle, breathing orifice, they are thicker and more solid. **Leeches** have segments, are rounder in shape

