PEST EXCLUSION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Protecting Consumers, Industry and the Environment.

The County Agricultural Commissioners are the enforcing authority of all laws and regulations relating to the prevention of the introduction into, or the spread within, the state of pests in their counties.

The commissioners enforce federal and state interior quarantines at:

- Interior delivery points
- Terminals
  - Post offices
  - Private carriers e.g. UPS, air freight and express carriers)
- Truck and bus terminals
- Railroad freight yards
- Seed houses
- Plant nurseries
- Feed mills
- Produce markets

In order for the quarantine to be effective, the commodity must be held for agricultural inspection. A cooperative working relationship exists among federal (USDA), state (CDFA), and counties (CAC), working separate, complimentary, or shared areas of responsibility.

Generally, USDA focuses on foreign pests at international ports of entry, and foreign markets, while CDFA and CAC are more involved in interstate and intrastate exclusion activities/issues.

The CDFA's pest exclusion and CAC network currently enforces 26 state exterior quarantines, 16 state interior quarantines, and 23 federal quarantines.

PARCEL INSPECTION

Agricultural commodities such as cut flowers and fruits, privately and commercially shipped from other states or countries that may be infested with exotic pests, can arrive fresh in California within hours. Such commodities are subject to agricultural quarantines.

Many states of the United States are infested with pests which could be damaging to agriculture and the environment if allowed into California and often items from other countries may enter into the United States in other states and then be shipped to California destinations.

Parcels arriving at Post Offices, Private carriers such as FedEx, UPS, air freight and express carriers are subject to inspection as a means of monitoring this pathway and intercepting those shipments which may be infested with exotic pests of concern to California.

Agricultural products as diverse as cut flowers, live plants, fruits, decorative items and even firewood all arrive in Los Angeles County through the various parcel facilities; nearly all are subject to inspection by our field staff.

As many parcels are sent from private party to private party, this is a busy pathway for inadvertent introduction of pests.

Favorite fruits and vegetables sent from back home may harbor pests which could, if allowed into California, prove enormously destructive to agriculture, private citizens, and to the environment.

Plants checked during parcel inspection often harbor destructive insect and disease pests, fruits often have both surface and internal pests, and even raw wood, such as twigs and logs for barbeque and smoker use, can be infested with pests and diseases that could threaten both garden and naturally occurring native plants.

Detection is so important that Los Angeles County currently has two teams of Detector Dogs to help sniff out products shipped in unmarked parcels.

AIR AND SEA FREIGHT INSPECTION

Air and sea freight may both be used for many commodities shipped into Los Angeles County.

Usually, air freight is used for smaller and/or more time-sensitive, highly perishable shipments and sea freight for larger shipments that can also stand up to the longer shipping times involved.

In either case, Los Angeles County inspectors are responsible for checking the arriving agricultural products for possible pests of concern.

The Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioners office maintains an inspection team at LAX six days a week to ensure rapid inspection of incoming air freight shipments;

our six District offices can provide efficient inspection of both air and sea freight shipments, at receivers business locations throughout the county, on weekdays.

NURSERY STOCK SHIPMENTS

Commercial nursery stock shipments may enter California by several pathways. While larger shipments usually arrive as truck or sea freight, smaller shipments may arrive as air freight or even parcel deliveries.

In all cases, independent of pathway, all nursery shipments entering the state and even some entering Los Angeles County from other California counties are, with few exceptions, subject to agricultural inspection.

Usually, whatever the pathway, larger shipments of nursery stock are allowed to move to the receiving nursery, where they can be unloaded and cared for, for inspection. Smaller air and parcel shipments are often cleared at the terminal of entry, if circumstances allow.

CALIFORNIA'S ACTION-ORIENTED PEST RATING SYSTEM

The State of California uses this (here abbreviated) action oriented system to determine how agricultural pests intercepted during pest exclusion inspections are to be treated. If a particular pest is intercepted during inspection, how this interception is handled is determined largely by the pest rating(s). *Interceptions of plant pests rated "A," "B," "Q," and "W" will all be likely to result in official quarantine holds and actions on the infested products including, but not limited to, monitored treatment, destruction, or removal from California.* Further, all shipments containing live plant pests which cannot be immediately identified are subject to holds until a determination of pest status can be made.

"A" A pest of known economic or environmental detriment and is either not known to be established in California or it is present in a limited distribution that allows for the possibility of eradication or successful containment.

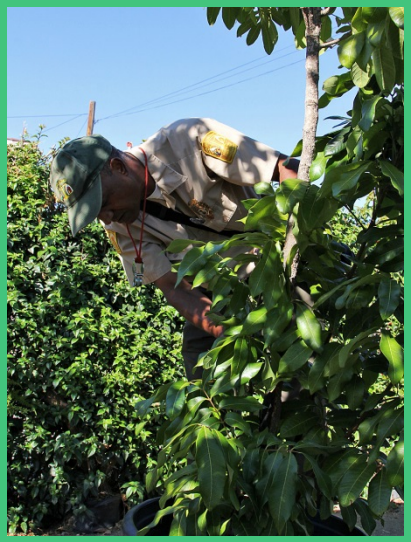
"B" A pest of known economic or environmental detriment and, if present in California, it is of limited distribution.

"C" A pest of known economic or environmental detriment and, if present in California, it is usually widespread. C-rated organisms are eligible to enter the state as long as the commodities with which they are associated conform to pest cleanliness standards when found in nursery stock shipments.

"D" An organism known to be of little or no economic or environmental detriment, to have an extremely low likelihood of weediness, or is known to be a parasite or predator. There is no state enforced action.

"Q" An organism or disorder suspected to be of economic or environmental detriment ,but whose status is uncertain because of incomplete identification or inadequate information. Temporary "A" action is required pending determination of a permanent rating.

"W" A species currently on the California Code of Regulations Section 4500 list of noxious weeds.



INTERCEPTED PESTS- NURSERY TRUCK INSPECTION

Scale insects on Sapodilla stem. Scale insects of several kinds adhere to plant stems and leaves, sucking plant sap for food, often unnoticed until infestations are heavy.

Cycad Aulacaspis scale: "Q" rated. Capable of building large populations on individual plants, damaging appearance and general plant health.

Bagrada Bug: With a wide host list, present now lose in the Los Angeles environment. Like the related scale insects, they pierce the leaves and stems of plants to feed on plant sap. Communal and can build heavy, damaging infestations.

Green Scale: "A" rated pest commonly intercepted on live plants and foliage from Hawaii and other tropical origins.

Pests found in and on shipments of live plants are considered to be of particular concern as they are often established infestations, living on their host plant, and capable of existing and reproducing there until able to spread into receiving nurseries and the environment.

Mango Shield Scale: "Q" rated Commonly found in shipments of live plants containing the hosts plants.

INTERCEPTED PESTS- AIR FREIGHT INSPECTION

Pickleworm larvae: “B” rated.

In Cucumber

Ginger Maggot: “Q” Rated

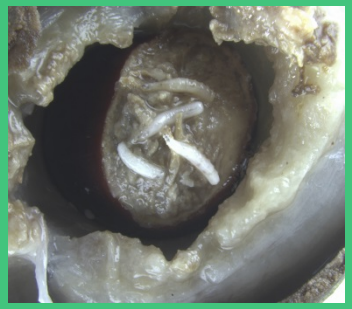
In Young Ginger

Young Giant African Snails: “A” rated.

On Betel Leaf

Sweet Potato Weevil: “A” rated. Damage from larval tunneling.

(Below: Sweet Potato Weevil larvae and damage.)



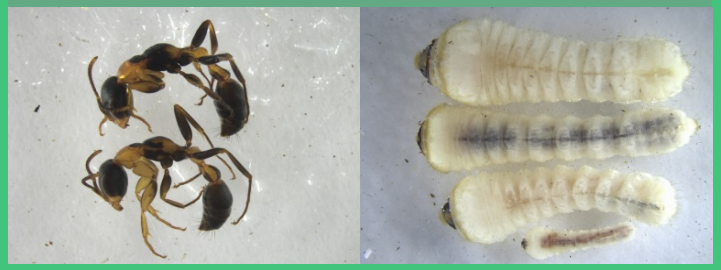
Oriental Fruit Fly – “A” Rated: Larvae (maggots) inside of and taken from one infested Longan fruit. Nearly all of the fruit wasdestroyed by larval feeding.

Asian Citrus Psillid: “A” Rated Spreads Citrus Greening Disease (HLB).

Shown here are just a few of the rated pests regularly intercepted in air freight shipments by Los Angeles County inspection teams. All are capable of doing serious damage to hosts, spreading rapidly through crops and the environment, and/or requiring expensive control measures if established.

INTERCEPTED PESTS- PARCEL INSPECTION

Elongate Twig Ant and Longhorn Beetle larvae from Louisiana firewood. Both "Q" rated Parcel inspection by Detector Dog team.



Little Fire Ant: "A" Rated: Commonly found on produce and live plants from Hawaii.

A bark beetle: Wood borers can be found in any untreated wooden objects.

White Footed Ant
"Q" Rated:
Found in parcel shipments from Hawaii and Florida. Mobile pests, ants are capable of infesting nearly any type of commodity.

Stellate Scale:
"Q" Rated
Found on live plants and cut foliage from several geographical origins. Scale insects oftenm go unnoticed unless infestations are heavy.

Philomycid Slug:
"Q" rated.
Not all pests are insects, damaging snails and slugs often infest live plants, cut foliage and produce. Many also carry damaging parasites.

Parcel inspection can be a real challenge for inspectors. Often objects are sent by private parties who have no idea that the contents violate California quarantine regulations. Such parcels are often unmarked as to contents and this is a primary reason for our team of Detector Dogs and Handlers.

The sensitive noses of the highly trained dogs allow them to detect the presence of agricultural commodities right through the packaging, saving considerable time and allowing the reliable detection of items that may well move undetected otherwise.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Shippers of Plant Products

Be aware of current quarantine regulations that may have an effect on products you wish to ship into California. Your local agricultural authorities can help you to determine what treatments, certifications, and other requirements you may need to meet.

If you cannot otherwise determine what requirements must be met, you may also contact our Department for help; our staff has every interest in ensuring that your shipments meet California's entry requirements.

Stay current on local quarantine issues that may change how California and other destinations view your product.

Please be aware of any particular pest problems at your fields or growing grounds that may result in your shipments being held at destination.

Receivers of Plant Products

Work with your suppliers to ensure that the products you import are clean, properly certified, if needed, and will meet all California entry requirements.

Establish a working relationship with our Department and never hesitate to inquire about the regulations as they pertain to any new products that you may wish to import.

Understand that all agricultural products are subject to regulation, most to inspection, and be sure to contact our Department for inspection should you receive products which do not have a documented inspection and release; we are glad to help with such items and to ensure that all of your incoming shipments are properly inspected and cleared into commerce in California.

Residents of California

Purchase items through established suppliers who are aware of quarantine regulations and can meet the standards of cleanliness for importation.

Discourage the sending of privately sourced "gifts" of produce, fruit and plants which may be well intentioned but which may also harbor unwanted and destructive pests.

If you are in doubt about any items, commercial or privately sourced, please feel free to call our office either prior to shipment or on receipt of the products, for guidance.

Your concern could save the State of California from invasion of potentially dangerous pest species.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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