Instructions for Submitting Insects for Identification

This form provides the necessary information for collection and preservation of insects. Your local County Extension office should have the materials for submission of samples. The manner in which insects are collected, preserved, and submitted ensure a proper identification in a timely and efficient way.

Materials for Submission of Samples Include: An Insect Identification Form, mailing tube, a vial, and a zip lock bag.

Submitting samples:
1. Fill out the form with as much information as possible. Write in pencil or permanent ink that will resist smearing in case the form gets wet.
2. For each sample, enclose an $8.00 check or money order made payable to University of Florida. Results will not be sent to you unless the fee is paid.
3. Within the zip lock bag, place the information sheet and payment. The zip lock bag will protect the paperwork from damage if the vial breaks or the alcohol leaks out of the vial.
4. Place your specimens in the vial and fill with alcohol, such as rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol. The alcohol preserves the insect so it will not decay. Screw the cap onto the vial tightly to prevent leaking and sample damage.
5. Put the zip lock bag and the insect specimen inside a mailing tube or sturdy box. Be sure that your name appears on the Insect Identification Form, and on the check or money order.
6. Mail, ship, or deliver samples to the laboratory as quickly as possible. The mailing address is printed on the Insect Identification Form. Inquiries about samples can be done through the office at 352-392-1901, Ext. 190, from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Services:
We will identify the specimen or notify the sender about its status within 14 days. A copy of the report will be sent to the name(s) which appear(s) on the Insect Identification Form. When necessary, the sample will be forwarded to a specialist. Depending upon the sample and where it will need to be routed, additional time for identification by the specialist may be required.

Collection:
Small insects can be collected using a Q-tip or a camel’s hair brush dipped in alcohol. It’s a good idea to record facts about the specimens when collected so that this information can be forwarded on the Insect Identification Form along with the sample. Send more than one specimen of its kind in the vial, particularly if it is ants or termites or some other pest which can be obtained in high numbers in a single incidence. If the specimen is mutilated, find a better sample to send.

Preservation:
After the insects are collected, they must be quickly killed to avoid damage. Most insects can also be killed by placing them in a vial containing 70% alcohol (common rubbing alcohol), or by freezing. Beetles, true bugs, bees, wasps, ants, spiders, and aquatic insects should be preserved in alcohol. Most larvae, especially white grubs and caterpillars, should be killed in boiling water to prevent darkening of the tissues after they are placed in alcohol. Drop the living larva into the boiling water and let it remain until the water cools. After removing the specimen from the water, pat it with a paper towel to remove the excess water, and transfer the larva into alcohol.

Some insects like moths can be identified best from dry specimens. Kill them by freezing. Carefully placing dead moths or butterflies within a layer of wax paper will protect the wings. Then put them in an envelope inside the mailing tube provided with the kit. Galls and damaged plant material can be carefully wrapped in soft tissue and submitted. Do not apply scotch tape directly to a specimen or crush the insect and mail it in an envelope.

RFSR022 – July 2005
Insect Identification Form

FEE: $8.00 per sample - make check payable to University of Florida

Date collected:______________  County:______________  Date sent:______________

Submitted by:
Name ____________________________________________
Company __________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
City/Zip __________________________________________
E-mail ____________________________________________
Phone No. _________________________________________
Fax No. ___________________________________________

Extension Agent:____________________________________

Collection address (if different):
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

How would you like to receive the report?
___ e-mail (preferred)
___ fax
___ phone
___ mail

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**HOUSEHOLD**

___ Structural
___ Bathroom
___ Bedroom
___ Kitchen / Pantry
___ Family / Living room
___ Garage
___ Patio / Screened area
___ Other:________

___ Stored Products
___ Kitchen / Pantry
___ Other:________

Type of Damage
___ Annoyance
___ Wood damage
___ Fabric / Textile
___ Food damage
___ Biting / Stinging
___ Other:________

**HUMAN / ANIMAL**

___ Humans
___ Livestock
___ Poultry
___ Pets
___ Facilities
___ Other:________

Type of Problem
___ Animal irritation
___ Neighbor complaints
___ Disease
___ Wounds
___ Other:________

**PLANTS**

___ Field Crop
___ Turf
___ Vegetables
___ Forest / Shade
___ Fruit

Plant name:_____________________________________
% of plants infested:__________

Parts where insect located
___ Leaves
___ Growing tips
___ Buds
___ Blossoms
___ Fruit / Nuts / Seeds
___ Stem / Trunk
___ Branches / Twigs
___ Roots
___ Tuber / Bulbs
___ Abnormal growth
___ Slow decline
___ Sudden collapse
___ Other:________

Symptoms
___ Die back
___ Leaf discoloration
___ Leaf drop
___ Tip burn
___ Fruit damage
___ Abnormal growth
___ Galls
___ Stunting
___ Abnormal growth
___ Other:________

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SAMPLE:

PRIORITY:  ___ Routine  ___ Urgent (if urgent, explain why)

INFORMATION REQUESTED:
___ mainly control information needed
___ species identification
___ other (please explain)