



Our Insect Enemies



Invasive Pests Go Postal: How To Keep Them Out Of The Mail

(NAPSA)—If you're not careful, an innocent trip to the post office could have a devastating impact on U.S. agriculture, economy and natural resources. That's because invasive pests can easily hide in fruits and vegetables and on plants, then quickly spread to new areas when sent through the mail.

Introducing even one pest to a new place is dangerous. For example, if you mail a single mango infested with fruit fly larvae to a friend, and he/she throws it into a garbage or compost pile, it could lead to a new fruit fly outbreak that could cost the United States millions of dollars.

Before mailing that package of fruits, vegetables, seeds, plants, soils or plant-based handicrafts, remember these tips to keep invasive pests from spreading:

- Check if you're in a location that restricts the movement of the agricultural item you plan to ship. You may be in an area that is under federal or state quarantine for an invasive pest. Go to the "Pest Tracker" at HungryPests.com to see quarantine areas.

- Hawaii and Puerto Rico have their own restrictions on what can be mailed to the U.S. mainland. Visit "Traveler Information" at the USDA's website.

- Before you ship or receive such items from foreign countries (including packages from family and friends), contact your USDA office to see if it's eligible for entry (even if you've shipped or received it before). You could face a fine if you send prohibited items through the mail.

- Expecting a package through an online purchase? Don't assume items



Mailing produce or plants could spread invasive pests.

from foreign retailers are safe or legal to import. Shippers may not be aware of U.S. regulations regarding restricted items or care about your liability as the importer. Visit "Imports" at the USDA's website.

- If an item is seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, make sure it's not sent again. If you purchased it from a foreign vendor, ask for your money back and don't accept the vendor's offer to replace the confiscated item.

Mailing agricultural products is not the same as carrying them with you across an international border or through customs at an international airport, as different procedures may apply. Visit www.aphis.usda.gov/travel to learn more.

We each play an important role in keeping our packages pest-free. Whether you're mailing agricultural items to others or having them shipped on your behalf, take care to follow these reminders, so invasive species don't spread.

Learn more at www.HungryPests.com.