Insects and Mites

Last Modified:

A PPQ 526 permit is required for the importation, interstate movement, and environmental release of **most** insects and mites that feed upon or infest plants or plant products, including agricultural crops, trees, shrubs, and native plants.

Apply for a Permit

Requirements

If you plan to import an exotic insect or mite, you will most likely be required to import the organism into an inspected containment facility. The following factors are taken into consideration when evaluating the level of containment required to receive imported insects and mites:

- Whether the organism is indigenous to the United States
- Whether the organism is indigenous to the area where you plan to move it
- Host plant availability
- Size and mobility of organism
- Life stage to be moved
- Number of organisms to be shipped
- Whether you plan to maintain a colony or destroy them upon arrival

Packages of insects or mites being shipped must not contain any plant material, soil, or other plant pests not authorized in the permit. Packages being imported will be

inspected by USDA officials at the port of entry. In addition, the importer is responsible for complying with other Federal or State requirements (for example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Please note that a completed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Form 3-177 may be required.

USDA does not require permits for dead insects and mites (with the exception of dead bees in the superfamily Apoidea under the authority of 7 CFR 319.76). Under 7 CFR 330.200, “biological specimens of plant pests, in preservation or dried, may be imported without further restriction under this part, but subject to inspection on arrival in the United States to confirm the nature of the material and freedom from risk of plant pest dissemination.” A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Form 3-177 may be required.

We also suggest that you review list of the domestic quarantine notices. This link has the current Federal regulations regarding the interstate movement of specific plant pests, plant diseases, and plants. Each subpart (major heading) covers a different organism.

Permits are also required for the following types of organisms or activities:

- Butterflies and moths in educational programs or public displays
- Insects in zoos and museums
- *Drosophila* flies

The movement of **genetically modified organisms** require permits from Biotechnology Regulatory Services.

The movement of insects, mites and ticks that **affect animals or vector animal diseases** require permits from Veterinary Services.

The movement of insects, mites, and ticks that **affect humans or vector human diseases** require permits from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Frequently Asked Questions

Find answers to commonly asked questions about the permit application process for insects and mites.

Expand All

Do I need a permit to move arthropod plant pests interstate even if they are established in the State where I plan to move them?

You must have a PPQ 526 permit to move ALL wild-type plant pests including biological control organisms within the United States and its Territories whether they occur in the destination State or not. If the organism is on the list of organisms approved for interstate movement by regulation, you do not need a PPQ 526 permit to move it within the contiguous United States if there are no contaminants such as other organisms, parasitoids, plant material, or pathogens. However, you must have a PPQ 526 permit to move organisms on the list to Hawaii and U.S. Territories. APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) regulates wild-type arthropods; APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) oversees the regulation of modified arthropods. If you are moving a genetically engineered (GE) arthropod plant pest, you must obtain an interstate movement or release permit from APHIS BRS.

Important: Your permit application should only include wild-type **or** GE arthropod plant pests, not both.

What level of containment is necessary for the pest I plan to move?

The level of containment depends on the species, geographic distribution, and intended use. Widely distributed organisms may require little or no containment. However, if you plan to import or move interstate an exotic organism that may be a pest, including biological control organisms, into an area of the United States in which it does not occur or could easily establish, you may be required to move the organism into a containment facility. Import or interstate movement of nonindigenous organisms may require a containment facility that has been inspected and approved by APHIS PPQ before they can be moved. APHIS considers the following risk factors, but not limited to, when evaluating the necessary level of containment facilities:

- Organism’s life cycle and reproductive rate
- Organism’s size and dispersal ability
- Purpose of the movement, such as proposed activities in laboratories, growth chambers, or greenhouses
- Whether the organism is indigenous to the United States and the area where you plan to move it
- Life stage required for movement
- Host availability
- Competition with native or beneficial species
- Survivability outside containment facilities
- Potential for the organism to be parasitized or infected with pathogens or contaminated with other organisms
- Whether you plan to maintain a colony, isolate, or destroy upon arrival

Do I need a USDA permit to import dead arthropods?

Most dead arthropods do not require a PPQ 526 permit, except as follows:

- For the superfamily *Apoidea* (bees), notification of importation of dried or preserved specimens must be received at least 10 days prior to arrival, per 7 CFR part 322.
- *Trogoderma granarium* (Dermestidae), per 7 CFR part 330 (§ 330.106 (a)).
- Dead arthropods for isolating or extracting microbes or making infectious clones of arthropod pathogens, plant pathogens, or biocontrol organisms must be accompanied by a PPQ 526 microbial permit for biological research.

Under 7 CFR 330.200, "biological specimens of plant pests, in preservation or dried, may be imported without further restriction under this part, but subject to inspection on arrival in the United States to confirm the nature of the material and freedom from risk of plant pest dissemination". Packages must not contain any plant material, soil, or other plant pests and are subject to inspection by Customs or USDA officials at the port of entry. In addition, the importer is responsible for complying with other Federal or State requirements (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.). Please note that a completed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Form 3-177 should accompany shipments at the point of entry.

Who should apply for the permit—the person who will send the organism or the person who will receive it?

In general, the receiver should apply for the permit since it is his or her responsibility to handle or contain the shipped organism. The exception to this is when a commercial entity is moving organisms for sale within the United States, particularly when the movement is to multiple States for retail sale or use.

Do species of Drosophila need Federal import or interstate movement permits?

- All shipments of *Drosophila* flies **into the United States and U.S. Territories** from foreign sources must be pre-authorized with a PPQ 526 permit.
- *Drosophila melanogaster* **interstate shipments** among States in the continental United States (including Alaska) do not require a PPQ 526 permit.
- Interstate shipments of *Drosophila* spp. **to and from Hawaii and U. S. Territories** require permits and containment.

Drosophila fly shipments manifested as “fruit flies” have raised agricultural and environmental concerns because this common name refers to notoriously significant plant pests like the Mediterranean and oriental fruit flies. As a result, a PPQ 526 permit is required so that shipments are appropriately routed to PPQ inspection stations to confirm the identities of the enclosed organisms, intercept undesired pests, or apply appropriate treatment, etc. Import permits and the appropriate use of shipping labels will facilitate movement through Customs and Border Protection inspection processes and minimize delays in PPQ inspection stations.

Contact Us

Importing Plant Pests

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