



Residential, Structural and Community Pests

Department of Entomology – Insect Note

Insect Note ENT/rsc-28 (2000)

IDENTIFYING YOUR PEST PROBLEM

In order to solve a pest problem effectively and safely, you first need to identify the pest correctly. Your county Cooperative Extension Service Center can provide assistance in identifying a pest problem locally or with the help of the NCSU-Plant Disease and Insect Clinic (PDIC). Specimens in poor condition are difficult (or impossible) to identify. Here's what you should do to help us solve your problem:

Digital Images

You can submit digital images to the PDIC for identification. Email images to digital_clinic@ncsu.edu. JPG and GIF are preferred formats.

Preserving Specimens

1. Most Insects - Roaches, termites, bugs, beetles, flies, wasps, ants, maggots, spiders, etc. should be shipped in 70% alcohol. Water can be used instead; however, the specimens will start to decay quickly and become indistinguishable.
2. Dry specimens should be sent in prescription vials, film canisters or similar containers to minimize damage. Use tissues as packing material.
3. Wood or other structural materials should be packaged in newspaper, styrofoam "peanuts", bubble wrap or some other material that will minimize disturbing or further damaging the sample.
4. Collect several specimens, if possible.

Some Precautions

- Never put insects unprotected in an envelope. They will get crushed during mail handling and this may prevent us from providing accurate identification.
- Never send in specimens without the minimal information (see below). Such samples are useless for our records and we cannot provide accurate help in solving any problem.
- Do not wrap insects in cellophane tape, this prevents us from examining key features needed to identify the insects.

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of the Acts of Congress
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opportunities are offered to all
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North Carolina State University,
North Carolina A&T State
University, U.S. Department
of Agriculture, and local
governments cooperating

- Do not stick specimens to paper with tape, unless this method is suggested by the staff at NCSU or a CES office.
- Do not place specimens in an empty vial or overcrowd them as they may decay, or get broken, or both.
- Never leave any sample in the sun or a closed car for even a few minutes; "cooked" samples may be impossible to diagnose.
- During our busier spring-summer months, specimens that arrive badly damaged and/or without data will be examined as time permits.

Important: Data submitted with insects must be complete and accurate. Please use the insect identification forms available at your local county Cooperative Extension Service Center.

Pest control recommendations often depend on accurate information that you provide about the sample and the circumstance under which it was found. Please include the following information:

- A. Date specimen was collected - the date specimen was actually found, not the date received by county agent or other second party.
 - B. Town and county where sample was collected - The town and county listed should be the location where insect was specimen actually found, which may not be the same as the collector's, agent's or a property owner's address. If the sample was not found within a town, please give the nearest town.
 - C. Name of collector - The name of the person who actually captured or collected the insect and can provide other details as needed. County agent or other second party should be listed separately from that of the collector.
 - D. Area(s) where specimens were found. - For example, in kitchen, on windowsill, bathroom, closet, carport, in a box of food, etc. Be as specific as possible, particularly about whether the insect was found indoors or outdoors. Simply writing "around house" does not provide sufficient information.
 - E. Approximate number and frequency of pests seen – Only a few seen? Is this a recurring problem?
- F. Any corrective measures that have been tried - for example, if pesticides have been applied by (by you or by a pest control company).
 - G. Other information such as phone (and fax numbers), as well as addresses and email addresses should be indicated on form.

Current Fee Schedule

North Carolina Samples

- \$10.00 per sample unless submitted by Cooperative Extension Service, NCSU or NCDA personnel.
- Multiple samples from one source (site) will be treated as one sample.
- Make check payable to NCSU and send to the Regular Mail Address for the Clinic noted below.

Out of State Samples

- \$40.00 per sample.
- Multiple samples of one source (site) will be treated as one sample.
- Make check payable to NCSU and send to the Regular Mail Address for the Clinic noted below.

Regular Mail Address:

Plant Disease and Insect Clinic
 Campus Box 7211
 North Carolina State University
 Raleigh, NC 27695-7211

FedEx, UPS, other commercial courier

Plant Disease and Insect Clinic
 1104 Williams Hall
 North Carolina State University
 Raleigh, NC 27695-7211
 (Ph: 919-515-3619)

State Courier Address (NC state agencies only)

Plant Disease and Insect Clinic
 Campus Box 7211 NCSU
 Raleigh, NC
 STATE COURIER: 53-61-21