

Insect Identification Form ¹

P.F. Ruppert and L.J. Buss²

The Insect Identification Form (SR022) is the form that must accompany samples submitted to the UF/IFAS Insect Identification Service.

The Insect Identification Form is available in printable form through the EDIS Web site. The form gives details about how to collect samples and what analyses will be performed. Please see Insect Identification Service (SR010) for more information.

1. This document is RF-SR022 (SR022), one of a series of the Department of Entomology and Nematology, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Date first printed: October 1998. Revised: November 2006. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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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. To inquire about samples, call (352) 392-1901, ext. 190, from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, or send e-mail to LJBuss@ifas.ufl.edu.

Services:

We will identify the specimen or notify the sender about its status within 14 days. 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.**

Send sample to: **Lyle Buss**
Insect ID Lab
Entomology and Nematology Dept., Bldg. 970
University of Florida, P.O. Box 110620
Gainesville, FL 32611-0620

Insect Identification Form

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

Date collected: _____ County: _____

Extension Agent: _____

Date sent: _____

Submitted by:

Collection address (if different):

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

E-mail _____

How would you like to receive the report?

Phone No. _____

___ e-mail (preferred)

Fax No. _____

___ fax

___ phone

___ mail

HOUSEHOLD

HUMAN / ANIMAL

PLANTS

- Structural**
 Bathroom
 Bedroom
 Kitchen / Pantry
 Family / Living room
 Garage
 Patio / Screened area
 Other: _____

- Humans
 Livestock
 Poultry
 Pets
 Facilities
 Other: _____

- Field Crop
 Turf
 Vegetables
 Forest / Shade

- Greenhouse
 Ornamentals
 Pasture
 Fruit

Plant name: _____
 % of plants infested: _____

- Stored Products**
 Kitchen / Pantry
 Other: _____

- Type of Problem**
 Animal irritation
 Neighbor complaints
 Disease
 Wounds
 Other: _____

- Parts where insect located**
 Leaves
 Growing tips
 Buds
 Blossoms
 Fruit / Nuts / Seeds
 Stem / Trunk
 Branches / Twigs
 Roots
 Tuber / Bulbs

- Symptoms**
 Die back
 Leaf discoloration
 Leaf drop
 Tip burn
 Fruit damage
 Abnormal growth
 Galls
 Stunting
 Slow decline
 Sudden collapse
 Other: _____

- Type of Damage**
 Annoyance
 Wood damage
 Fabric / Textile
 Food damage
 Biting / Stinging
 Other: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SAMPLE:

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

INFORMATION REQUESTED:

- ___ mainly control information needed
 ___ species identification
 ___ other (please explain)