

INSECT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Residents are encouraged to submit unfamiliar insects to the lab for identification. These insects are important to our program of protecting US and California agriculture because resident submissions often allow us to become aware of exotic pests and how widespread they are in San Diego County.

Please bring fresh, intact insects to the lab for determination. When you submit insects:

- You must complete a **“Specimen for Determination”** form that requires a complete mailing address.
- Please ensure that you have COMPLETELY and LEGIBLY filled out the address portion of the form because this is used by the US Postal Service to deliver your results.
- You may print the **“Specimen for Determination”** form from this website and mail it (with the insect).
- Or you may bring the insect to either AWM offices (we have forms here).
- If a County Insect Detection Specialist services traps on your property, you may give the insect and form to them for delivery.
- Add where the insect was found (e.g. carpet, apricot tree, lawn, tomato). It is better to supply more information than not enough.
- Isolate small insects. If immobile, circle with marker; if mobile, place a sample in vial. Make it obvious to entomologist the insect you want identified. If the insect is on a sticky trap, use arrow to point out the insect you want identified.
- We do not typically identify insects from photographs.
- Your insect determination is usually returned by snail mail within 2 weeks of submission with information on the insect.
- You may mail or drop off the specimen at the North County Office or the Kearny Mesa office. Addresses and telephone numbers for these Agriculture, Weights & Measures Offices are:

North County Office: Agriculture, Weights & Measures
County of San Diego
151 East Carmel Street
San Marcos, CA 92078
760-752-4700

Kearny Mesa Office: Agriculture, Weights & Measures
County of San Diego
5555 Overland Ave. Suite 3101
San Diego, CA 92123-1256
858-694-2739

TIPS ON INSECT COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SUBMISSION

The Entomology Laboratory welcomes all submissions associated with the commercial production of a plant commodity. The Lab will also assist the pest control industry, as well as citizens with home and landscaping concerns.

General Sticky Traps.

A sticky glue called “tangle foot” can be simply applied to piece of cardboard and be used as a general sticky trap (regardless of color). This trap can be attached on the main stem or branch during of any tree or location and used as a general collection device, including gold-spotted oak borer (see below for GSOB-specific trap). Tangle foot can be purchased from numerous vendors.

Gold Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) Collection.

Dr. Tom Coleman, US Forest Health Protection, suggests the public buys traps from Synergy Semiochemical Company if they want to trap for GSOB. This commercially-manufactured purple trap (the same ones deployed by the US Forest Service for GSOB and emerald ash borer) can be purchased from Synergy Semiochemical Company (PHONE #: 604-454-1122 or 604-568-8501 E-mail: synergy@semiochemical.com). The purple color of the trap has a specific reflectance that makes it effective. Homeowners will not be able to make their own effective color trap due to the specific color requirement. Dr. Coleman warns against digging into a living tree to find larvae. It is difficult to find larvae and the attempt may do more harm than good. However, on a newly felled tree or branch, the larvae can be found just under the bark during the fall to spring.

From the Garden. If the insects are living on the leaf tissue of a tomato plant, snip a branch off of the tomato plant and immediately drop the specimen into a plastic zipper bag with air. If they are hopping insects such as a psyllid, it is best to carefully place the plastic bag over the end of the branch first, close the bag and then cut the branch to prevent the insects from flying away once disturbed.

From the Home. The insects should be delivered in a plastic zipper bag, jar, pill

bottle or small plastic container. The insect may be preserved in alcohol if possible. If not, a small container will do. Avoid submitting samples on tape, or which have been squished, but insect sticky traps may be submitted. Our entomologists specialize in agricultural plant arthropods; therefore you should contact County Vector Control 858-694-2888 for expertise on pet or human health insects (e.g. biting or blood-feeding insects).