

Guidelines for Importing Arthropods and Other Invertebrates into Florida

This list gives guidance for the pet trade, exhibits, field release, and similar uses. Organisms for scientific research inside quarantine laboratories (e.g. exotic pests and disease vectors) are not listed below; they also require permits and are considered case by case. These guidelines are advice about what to expect for most permit applications reviewed by FDACS-DPI, but the Permit Conditions may differ as circumstances warrant.

No permits are needed for most species that are native to or widely established in Florida if they are collected within Florida.

Permits are required for all regulated organisms brought into Florida from outside of the state.

Permits are also required for certain Pests of Limited Distribution as deemed by the DPI and for native endangered or threatened species. Applicants should first inquire whether a USDA-APHIS permit is required; if APHIS does not regulate it, an FDACS-08208 permit is then required.

Species that are not identified by scientific names on the application will be automatically denied.

The permittee must submit voucher specimens if the organisms are imported in quantity. The purpose is to independently verify the identification. Photographs are acceptable if the organisms are easy to identify by photos and if the individuals are few in number (e.g., personal pets not for resale). Detailed instructions on curation and related fees will be provided to permittees when vouchers are required.

The four categories reflect the permit holder's ability to contain the organisms. The examples given below are not exhaustive due to the volume of species in the trade.

I. Regular: The permit application usually will be approved without conditions.

- **Annelida: Oligochaeta** (earthworms): all species established in the state.
- **Arachnida:**
 - **Araneae: Theraphosidae** (tarantulas): most species.
 - **Scorpiones:** all families except Buthidae (no CITES species). Non-dangerous scorpions such as: *Hadogenes* spp. (flat rock scorpions), *Hadrurus* spp. (giant hairy scorpions), *Heterometrus* spp. (Asian forest scorpions), *Pandinus* spp. (emperor scorpions).
- **Isopoda: Oniscoidea:** all native or established terrestrial isopods, e.g. *Armadillidium vulgare*, *Cubaris murina*, *Porcellio scaber*.
- **Insecta:**
 - **Coleoptera:** *Tenebrio molitor* (mealworm), *Zophobas* sp. (superworms).
 - **Hymenoptera: Formicidae:** ants, only non-reproductive castes, e.g. workers of *Pogonomyrmex occidentalis* (Western harvester ant).
 - **Lepidoptera:** *Manduca sexta* (tobacco hornworm), *Agraulis vanillae* (Gulf fritillary), *Colias philodice* (clouded sulphur), *Danaus plexippus* (monarch), *Papilio polyxenes* (black swallowtail), *Vanessa* spp. (admirals, painted ladies). Butterflies imported for release must originate from Eastern North America (delimited by 100° longitude).
 - **Orthoptera:** *Acheta domestica* (house cricket), *Gryllobates sigillatus* (tropical house cricket, banded cricket).

II. Conditional: Applicant must apply for a permit and provide a written description of security measures used to prevent escape of organisms on the permit application. Cages must be locked or double-contained (e.g., a snap-lock container inside of a storage tote with a secure lid).

- **Arachnida:** all non-native species except as listed above.

- **Amblypygi** (whipscorpions): all non-native species. *Damon variegatus* (Tanzanian whipspider).
- **Scorpiones: Buthidae**: all non-native buthid scorpions. *Androctonus* spp., *Leiurus* spp., *Tityus* spp.
- **Solifugae** (camel spiders): e.g. *Galeodes* spp.
- **Theraphosidae**: arboreal tarantulas, e.g. *Poecilotheria* spp., *Stromatopelma calceatum*.
- **Chilopoda** (centipedes): all non-native species, such as **Scolopendromorpha**: *Scolopendra* spp.
- **Diplopoda** (millipedes): all non-native species, such as *Archispirostreptus gigas* (giant African millipede).
- **Insecta: Blattodea**: *Gromphadorrhina portentosa* (Madagascar hissing roach; males only).

III. Restricted: Permitted only to institutions such as museums, zoos, and butterfly exhibits. Applicant must provide detailed written description of security measures used to prevent escape of organisms, including transportation packaging, Standard Operating Procedures, and handling by staff. Public access to the permitted organisms must be restricted.

- **Insecta:**
 - **Blattodea**: *Gromphadorrhina portentosa* (Madagascar hissing cockroach, both sexes).
 - **Coleoptera**: any plant-feeding **Scarabaeoidea**; *Thermonectes marmoratus* (sunburst diving beetle).
 - **Mantodea**: *Hymenopus coronatus* (orchid mantis), *Tenodera sinensis* (Chinese mantis).
 - **Phasmatodea**: all exotic walkingsticks.
 - **Hemiptera**: Reduviidae (assassin bugs)

IV. Prohibited: Any organism demonstrated to be or potentially capable of causing significant agricultural or ecological harm, becoming nuisances, or known hazards.

- Exotic plant-feeding insects that are deemed to be pests.
- Gastropoda: all plant-feeding snails and slugs, e.g. *Lissachatina fulica* (giant African land snail).
- Non-native insects that are intended for release outdoors, such as for research, pest management, or celebrations.
 - Plant-feeding insects such as non-native butterflies and moths.
 - Predatory insects such as *Orius* spp., dicyphine mirids, ladybird beetles (Coccinellidae), and praying mantises (*Tenodera sinensis*, *Mantis religiosa*).
- Blattodea: non-native pet trade feeder cockroaches, including but not limited to: *Blaptica dubia* (dubia roach), *Eublaberus posticus* (orange-headed roach), *Nauphoeta cinerea* (lobster roach).
- Isopoda: any non-native and non-established species of terrestrial oniscoids, e.g. *Armadillidium maculatum*, *Oniscus asellus*, *Porcellio dilatatus*.
- Formicidae: reproductive colonies of non-native ants (including queens or gamergates).
- Araneae: extremely venomous spiders, e.g. Sicariidae (recluse and sand spiders).

The list may change as new information becomes available. Applications for exceptions may include an environmental impact statement, or new evidence that the species is widely established in Florida, or peer-reviewed, published experimental evidence of safety, such as host-plant choice testing.