

Seven Ways to Leave Hungry Pests Behind

An invasive species is an organism that causes ecological or economic harm in a new environment where it is not native. These species may be introduced intentionally or by accident.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has identified seven key things people can do to help prevent the spread of invasive pests.

- 1. Buy local, burn local.** When you are camping outside and need to start a fire, buy local firewood. Invasive pests and their larvae can hide and ride long distances in firewood. Don't give them a free ride to start a new infestation. If you must move firewood (even just a short distance), make sure it has been heat-treated to kill any pests that might have been in or on it.
- 2. Plant carefully.** Ask your families to avoid using plant species in their gardens that could bring invasive pests to your state. For example, orange jasmine, a common landscape plant in citrus-producing states, can carry the Asian citrus psyllid. Make sure plants are purchased from reputable nurseries.
- 3. Don't bring or mail** fresh fruits, vegetables or plants into your state or another state unless agricultural inspectors have cleared them beforehand.
- 4. Cooperate with quarantines.** Cooperate with any agricultural quarantine restrictions and allow authorized agricultural workers access to your property for pest or disease surveys.
- 5. Keep it clean.** Wash outdoor gear, shoes, and bikes between fishing, hunting, or camping trips. Clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items (such as swing sets, soccer balls, toys, kiddie pools, and portable sandboxes) when moving from one home to another.
- 6. Learn to identify.** If you see signs of an invasive pest or disease, write down or take a picture of what you see and then report it to your nearest USDA office. Visit www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/sphd for contact information.
- 7. Speak up.** When returning from international travel, tell U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the port of entry (airport, seaport, or land border) if you are carrying any agricultural items or food. To learn more, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/travel. You can also call USDA-APHIS at (301) 851-2046 for plant-related questions or (301) 851-3300 for animal-related questions.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture