

## HOW THEY SPREAD TO NEW AREAS

Although some invasive pests spread naturally, it's uncommon. Most of these pests move domestically and internationally through pathways people create, such as:

- Passenger baggage
- Plants and plant parts
- Recreational vehicles
- Outdoor household goods
- Agricultural materials
- Internet sales
- Mail
- Outdoor gear
- Firewood

People help me get around on the things they move and pack.



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Invasive insects and plant diseases cost the United States an estimated \$40 billion each year.** Farmers lose crops, prices for produce and goods increase, and foreign markets can close to U.S. products from infested areas. Plus, there are costs associated with eradicating these hungry pests. Invasive species also throw our ecosystem off balance.

These hungry pests feast on and infest our agriculture, damage our parks and forests, wreck our gardens, push out native species, reduce biological diversity, and change wildfire frequency and intensity.

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are beautiful. I could just eat them up!



For more information, visit



## INVASIVE PEST THREATS IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

We have the following pests in our Territories and are working to keep others of concern out:

### Detected

- Citrus greening
- Tomato leaf miner\*
- Coffee bean borer\*
- Coffee rust\*
- Native West Indian and Caribbean fruit flies

### Suitable Habitat

- (Be on the lookout for these pests.)
- Mediterranean and Mexican fruit flies
  - Mango seed weevil\*
  - Citrus canker
  - Citrus black spot
  - Fusarium wilt tropical race 4\*
  - Giant African snail
  - Avocado seed moth\*

## THE IMPACT OF INVASIVE PESTS IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Puerto Rico is home to more than 8,000 farms—spanning more than 450,000 acres. The island produces major crops such as coffee, bananas, plantains, and exotic fruits (including mango, avocado, and citrus). Agriculture is an important part of the local economy.

The U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) also have significant agricultural production. In 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau reported St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John had a total of 565 farms, which produced bananas, mangos, coconuts, avocados, and papaya among their top commodities.

In 1972, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) created the Predeparture Program in Puerto Rico, USVI, and Hawaii, which set up a domestic quarantine and regulatory framework to protect all American agriculture. The Predeparture Program performs passenger and cargo inspections for people and items headed to the United States. These safeguarding efforts ensure that untreated produce and regulated commodities aren't transported from their tropical home to other destinations in the United States where new pests and diseases could be devastating.

**To learn more about what these pests look like and how to stop their spread, or report suspect invasive pests in Puerto Rico or USVI, visit:**

**[HungryPests.com](http://HungryPests.com)**

\*Locally regulated

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Don't give hungry pests a free ride.  
Help stop the spread of invasive species by preventing their introduction in the first place.**

**Don't move untreated firewood.** Tree-killing beetles could be hiding inside. Instead, buy certified, heat-treated firewood, or buy or gather wood where you burn it.

**Garden responsibly.** Source your seeds and plants domestically or follow USDA import regulations before purchasing plants or seeds online. Learn more about internet sales and responsible gardening practices at [HungryPests.com](http://HungryPests.com).

**Avoid moving or mailing** homegrown fresh fruits, vegetables, plants, or soil to new places without contacting your local USDA office first. Moving soil within to the continental United States is restricted unless authorized by USDA.

**Support USDA's work.** Allow agricultural staff to access your property for pest or disease surveys. Comply with quarantine restrictions, which are designed to keep pests and diseases from spreading.

**Clean outdoor items.** Wash vehicles and outdoor gear between fishing, hunting, or camping trips. Clean lawn care equipment and outdoor furniture before moving it from one home to another.

**Spot and report.** Look for signs of invasive pests and report them to your local USDA office ([www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/sphd](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/sphd)). Report in USVI:

<https://pesttracker.org/state?code=VI>.

Report in Puerto Rico:

[www.nationalplantboard.org/southern-plant-board1.html](http://www.nationalplantboard.org/southern-plant-board1.html).

**Speak up.** Declare food and agricultural items to customs officials when returning from international travel. Visit [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov) and search "traveler information" to find out what's allowed.

**We can fight back against these hungry pests and keep them from destroying our ecosystems, crops, and local plant life.**

**What's the big deal?  
Do I look Invasive?**

