Insect Identification Services

The LSU AgCenter, LSU Department of Entomology, and Louisiana State Arthropod Museum (LSAM) offer insect identification services for the citizens and stakeholders of Louisiana.

Due to the diversity of insects in our state and the diversity of places where insects are found, we have established a standard operating procedure to best serve you. If you have an insect (or arthropod) that you are concerned about, either for crop health, garden health, or personal health reasons, please follow the steps below. Note: Although we are interested in all insects, please refrain from submitting specimens that are simply interesting or curious to you! The internet is a great source of information, and we do our best to provide services to insects of potential impact.

Identification Procedure

1. Either photograph or collect the insect in the appropriate manner (requirements provided below). Note: if you have an infestation or more than one insect is present, it is often useful to image or collect several, as this may assist in identification.
2. Submit the image or specimen and associated data to your parish/county extension agent. A complete list of agents is available here: https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/it/find-your-agent
3. The parish/county agent will respond with identification and specimens of particular importance will be sent to the Department of Entomology at LSU for confirmation and/or vouchering.
4. In the event the parish agent cannot successfully identify the insect, he/she will contact Victoria Bayless, Curator of the LSAM, and state insect identifier. She will work with the parish agent, faculty, and staff in the Department of Entomology to identify the specimen.

Photo Requirements

In order to provide a ***rapid*** and ***accurate*** identification, we have requirements necessary for all submissions. Any submissions not meeting these minimum requirements can result in delays in identification or an inability to provide an accurate and confident response.

Photos of Insects - Requirements

1. The insect is in-focus (not blurry)
2. There is something for scale included in the image (a coin, a pen/pencil, ruler, etc.)
3. Appropriate data is provided with the image
   - Date image was taken.
   - Location of the image (parish + nearest town are good, GPS coordinates are best).
   - Submitter's contact information, including name, phone, email, and address.
   - Additional notes that may be helpful, including where the insect was collected, why it is a suspected pest, etc.

The submission portal for images and associated information is here:

http://forms.lsuagcenter.net/form.aspx?pid=55d2084f-b9d4-4d70-8ba5-186f35f6fc5e&formid=f4e73049-df5c-4e7d-8313-2d03b7125962

Dead Specimen Requirements

Submission of the actual insects themselves is the best way to receive a confident identification. This process takes time, however, and some important requirements must be followed to make an identification as quickly as possible. Note: we will not accept any bodily tissues or fluids. If the samples appear to be unhygienic and/or pose a health concern, we will incinerate without identification.

- In order to kill an insect, simply collect into a sealed container (plastic zipper baggie, pill bottle, etc.) and freeze for several hours (overnight preferred). Insects are extremely hardy and may re-animate if not frozen for at least several hours!
- If the insect is soft-bodied ("squishy," e.g., caterpillars, fly maggots, etc.), they can be placed in a sealed container of rubbing alcohol, ethanol, or even white vinegar for preservation. If this is not done, the specimens will shrivel, likely making identification impossible.

Insect Specimens - Requirements

1. The insect is dead and in a sealed container (see above).
2. Appropriate data is provided with the insect
   - Date collected.
   - Location where insects were collected (parish + nearest town are good, GPS coordinates are best. When possible, please use decimal degrees to four decimal places).
   - If the insect is in fluid, you *must state* what the fluid is (e.g., rubbing alcohol).
   - Submitter's contact information, including name, phone, email, and address.
   - Additional notes that may be helpful, including where the insect was collected, why it is a suspected pest, etc.
3. Ship specimen(s) to the address below. If the specimen is in rubbing alcohol or ethanol, please ensure it is packaged appropriately to avoid leakage.

Specimens should be sent to the following address:
Insect Identification Services
c/o Department of Entomology, LSAM
404 Life Sciences Building, Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Insect Identifiers for Louisiana State University Entomology Department

When mailing large specimens please send as complete and non-damaged a specimen as possible. For microscopic specimens please follow the guidelines below. Photographs can be sent directly to the emails below.

Stephen Baca: Insect Identification (Physical Specimens and Photo ID), life history and general control.
Email: sbaca@agcenter.lsu.edu
Assistant Professor and Director of the LSAM
Office: 225-578-1813
Mail Specimens to Entomology Department
402 Life Sciences Rm 404, Baton Rouge, LA 70803 with email indicating you have specimens being delivered.

Chris Carlton: Insect Identification (Photo ID), life history, no chemical control recommendations.
Email: ccarlt@lsu.edu

Victoria Bayless: Insect and Spider identification no chemical control recommendations (Physical Specimens and Photo ID).
Email: vbayless@agcenter.lsu.edu
Send specimens to: PO Box 139, Rosedale, LA 70772 with email indicating you have specimens being delivered.
Office: 225-578-1634

Kristen Healy: Public health entomology, medical entomology, and pollinators; some control recommendations.
Email: khealy@lsu.edu
Office: 225-578-7386

Karen Sun: Identification of termites and ants; some control recommendations.
Email is preferred method of contact
Email: qsun@agcenter.lsu.edu
Office: 225-578-1831

Aaron Ashbrook: Urban and Peri-urban insects, household, gardens, lawns; some control recommendations.
Email: aashbrook@agcenter.lsu.edu
Office: 225-578-1634

Mike Stout: General questions about the Entomology Department, agricultural pests
Email: mstout@agcenter.lsu.edu
Office: 225-578-1634