

PLANTS AND ENVIRONMENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Termites in imported earthmoving equipment

Termite mudding and termite workers were suspected to have been found in earthmoving machinery recently imported from Australia. A specimen was identified as a mason bee or mud dauber larva (Hymenoptera: Sphecidae). The species was not determined but these insects are not established in New Zealand. The machinery was undergoing a full maintenance programme as part of its commission when the mudding was found. This appeared to be the only incidence but the machine was steam-cleaned by the new owner as a precaution.

Giant African snail found on pallet

A giant African snail (*Achatina fulica*) was found under a pallet with a plastic cup-shaped base, recently imported from Taiwan. Dissection of the snail revealed it was a juvenile and sexually immature. It was likely a solitary hitchhiker that originated from a shipping container shared by seven companies. The container was devanned in Auckland before the goods were distributed to the consignees. All six of the other consignees were contacted and each conducted an inspection of the pallets and goods (where these were still available). No further specimens were found.

Brown marmorated stink bug interceptions in goods ex USA

There were two recent interceptions of as the brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys* (Hemiptera: Pentatomidae), a high-risk pest present in the USA. In the first case, an Invercargill funeral home employee found a single live insect in a consignment of goods while unpacking them following their arrival by air freight (parcel post) from the USA. The insect was given to the local MPI Quarantine Inspector and identified at MPI's Plant Health and Environment Laboratory. The bug was found inside a plastic bag containing mortuary equipment. The goods were imported as non-risk items, with no MPI clearance required. All goods and packaging were examined by the notifier, but no further insects were found. Although this species poses a high biosecurity risk to New Zealand, in this instance the risk was considered very low as the package was unpacked in a fully contained area and only a single specimen found and killed. An

The Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) Investigation and Diagnostic Centres & Response directorate (IDC & R) is accountable for the investigation and diagnosis of suspect exotic pests and diseases. In the plants and environment sectors IDC & R has investigators and scientists based in Auckland and Christchurch. The IDC & R provides field investigation, diagnostic testing and technical expertise with regard to new pests and diseases affecting plants and the environment. The IDC & R also conducts surveillance and response functions, and research and development to support surveillance and incursion response activities.

email to the American supplier explaining the biosecurity significance of this species has been sent by MPI. As the bug was active and apparently healthy when detected, and was later identified as a female, this raises the question as to whether an established population might have resulted had the bug found its way outside (the local botanic gardens were 500 metres away.) To explore this scenario the specimen was surgically examined for the presence of eggs. None were found, so it was inferred that the bug would not have posed a biosecurity risk even if it had escaped.

In the second case, a live shield-shaped insect was found inside a parcel recently arrived from Virginia, USA. The insect was described as 10–15 mm long and mottled brown. The notifier was asked to photograph the insect, and then place it in the freezer to kill it. The photograph looked highly likely to be a brown marmorated stink bug and this was confirmed after it was sent to MPI's Plant Health and Environment Laboratory for identification. The notifier carefully inspected the rest of the parcel and found no more insects.

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