



Hitchhiker pests

What are hitchhiker pests

Hitchhiker pests are those that can 'hitch a ride' to Australia within, or on shipping containers, imported goods and other forms of transportation. They are not native to Australia but have a specific biology or behaviour that enables them to use or associate with inanimate goods or containers, survive an extended journey, and actively disperse into Australia's environment.

For example, khapra beetle can survive for several years in the cracks and crevices of shipping containers without food. This is due to a biological trait where they can go into a dormant state. Once they come across a food source (such as grain), khapra can re-emerge. If they are in a favourable place (such as a grain storage facility in Australia), their population can grow rapidly and contaminate any nearby goods.

Risk of hitchhiker pests

Hitchhiker pests can destroy entire agricultural industries. Some, such as khapra beetle, pose a human health risk. Some can become a major nuisance in outdoor settings (such as invasive ants) or the household (such as brown marmorated stink bug). They can also cause a wide range of problems for our native plants and wildlife by outcompeting them for resources and introducing diseases.

It is essential that we work together to keep hitchhiker pests out of Australia.

What to look for

Keep an eye out for pests themselves, like insects, spiders, snails, snakes and toads. Hitchhiker pests are great at hiding, so also look for common signs of their presence, such as:

- Sawdust
- Droppings
- Skins
- Eggs or egg masses
- Nests
- Mud smears
- Dirt
- Small holes in timber, plastic or cardboard

Where to look for hitchhiker pests

Keep an eye on all imported goods, cargo, shipping containers, and parcels that have recently arrived in Australia from overseas.



Learn more about hitchhiker pests and what to look for here.

Report a pest

Seen something unusual? Secure and report it, even if you're not sure.

1. Secure the pest (e.g. shut the container door or secure the goods) and capture a photo if it can be done safely and without the possibility of the pest escaping.
2. Report the pest to our **See. Secure. Report.** hotline on **1800 798 636** or online at **agriculture.gov.au/report**.
3. Our specially trained officers investigate all reports relating to imported items. This includes items purchased in a store or arriving through airports, seaports or mail.

Important: You will not be prosecuted if you or someone you know has accidentally imported risk material.

