



# Fire Ants in Lubbock

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## What is quarantine and what does it mean?

A quarantine minimize the introduction or reduces the risk of spreading a pest or disease. Quarantining Lubbock County means that any quarantined article would have to be inspected and permitted to move into the IFA free area. IFA is also a Federally quarantined species meaning nursery floral operations wishing to ship outside the quarantine area or to other states would need a permit or can apply for and follow guidelines outlined in a compliance agreement. Quarantines add additional cost to the article being shipped due to mandatory treatments and handling of the articles to ensure they are free of IFA.

Imported fire ant (IFA) (*Solenopsis invicta* Buren) is a quarantined species in Texas. You can refer to the Texas IFA Quarantine Map at [http://www.agr.state.tx.us/producer\\_info/regulatory/reg\\_fire\\_ant.htm](http://www.agr.state.tx.us/producer_info/regulatory/reg_fire_ant.htm), including the quarantined counties ([http://www.agr.state.tx.us/producer\\_info/regulatory/reg\\_fire\\_ant\\_counties.htm](http://www.agr.state.tx.us/producer_info/regulatory/reg_fire_ant_counties.htm)). Quarantined articles from these counties must be certified IFA-free for movement to fire ant free areas of Texas and other states. These articles include:

1. the red imported fire ant in any living state of development;
2. soil, compost, decomposed manure, humus, muck, and peat, separately or with other things;
3. plants with roots with soil attached;
4. grass sod;
5. baled hay and baled straw stored in direct contact with the ground;
6. logs, pulpwood, and stumpwood; and
7. used mechanized soil-moving equipment.
8. Any other products, articles, or means of conveyance of any character whatsoever, not covered by subsection (a) of this section, are quarantined articles when it is determined that they present a hazard of spread of red imported fire ants and the person in possession thereof has been so notified.

Further details on IFA quarantine can be found at (link is pending).

USDA's Animal and Plant Inspection Service, under plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ), issued guidelines under which quarantined articles can be moved to the free areas. These guidelines can be found in USDA's Fire Ant program Manual:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/manuals/domestic/pdf\\_files/Fire\\_Ant.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/manuals/domestic/pdf_files/Fire_Ant.pdf). Especially the regulatory part of this manual is useful for those trading quarantined articles from IFA-infested areas to IFA-free areas. USDA-authorized treatments are given in Appendix A. of this manual. These treatments are used by those nursery-floral operations that decide to sign a "Compliance Agreement" with TDA and USDA, and use a USDA-issued IFA Compliance Stamp, instead of a phytosanitary certificate, to qualify each shipment. Any violation of quarantine is investigated by the agriculture departments of the receiving and shipping states as well as by USDA-APHIS-PPQ. With this quality control process in place, quarantine articles can be shipped from the IFA-infested to IFA-free areas of the U.S. The inspections for those shippers who are not under compliance can request a phytosanitary certificate of their commodities from any TDA regional office. Shippers must comply with 'no pest tolerance policy' of the importing state and make the shipment IFA-free to receive a 'phyto.' Each inspection to issue a phyto costs \$30 regardless of the amount in the shipment. A phyto is good for 14 days during which the shipment must be made.

Information from the Texas Dept. of Agriculture

- [Red Imported Fire Ant Quarantine](#)
- [Map of Quarantined Counties in Texas](#)