



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
The Capitol • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Please Respond to:
Division of Plant Industry
P.O. Box 147100/1911 Southwest 34th Street
Gainesville, Florida 32614-7100
Telephone: (352) 372-3505/Facsimile: (352) 955-2300

February 14, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida Certified Nurseries

FROM: Richard Gaskalla, Director

SUBJECT: Pink Hibiscus Mealybug (PHM) Advisory

As the spring shipping season for nursery stock approaches, the Division of Plant Industry has been asked by concerned nurserymen to address the issues associated with the movement of PHM infested plant material. There have been numerous shipments of plant material both within and out of the state of Florida verified as positive for PHM. At the present time there are 248 sections (square miles) of Miami-Dade County where PHM has been detected. Over 100 quarantine actions have been taken in nurseries located in Miami-Dade County for positive identification of PHM on nursery stock. All of the quarantine actions involved hibiscus plants.

The Division of Plant Industry has developed a compliance agreement for all hibiscus producers in Miami-Dade County to address this issue. The compliance agreement will require treatment of hibiscus with an approved pesticide for PHM control within 72 hours of shipping. In addition, all Florida plant brokers that obtain hibiscus plants originating in Miami-Dade County for shipment to their customers located outside Florida will be required to maintain PHM treatment records. Treatment records shall be provided to the plant broker by the producing nursery.

The current biological control program will over time reduce the populations of PHM to a low level. However, in the interim to protect Florida Agriculture and the Florida nursery industry's important domestic and international markets, **we are strongly advising you to adhere to the following:**

- **Ensure your employees are aware of this plant pest and understand the consequences (rejections and/or quarantines) should this pest be detected in your shipments or establishment. For additional information on PHM please visit our website at: <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/>**
- **Maintain a good pest control program using chemical treatments including a systemic insecticide for PHM as recommended by your local County Extension office. Please see above website for additional treatment information.**
- **Purchase hibiscus and other high risk host plants from registered and certified sources and thoroughly inspect them prior to exposing other parts of your facility to similar or other plants.**
- **Continually inspect the environment of your establishment for PHM. If detected, contact your local DPI inspector to ensure biological control agents are or have been released into the infested area.**

Please know your efforts and cooperation in helping us prevent the spread of this pest is sincerely appreciated. If there is any additional information you need from us, please contact your local DPI office.

RDG/cb

cc: Mr. Craig Meyer, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture
Mr. Ben Bolusky, Executive Vice President, FNGLA
Mr. Mike Shannon, State Plant Health Director, USDA
Plant Inspectors and Supervisors