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A Product Of The Integrated Pest Management Working Group

Isolation/Bagging and Monitoring Fact Sheet

Brief description of treatment

Bagging and monitoring objects suspected of being infested is not, strictly speaking, an IPM treatment as it does not eradicate insects. However, it can indicate the presence of an active infestation and is an important part of an IPM program. Bagging and monitoring a collections item or items serves to quarantine the item, so that other items will not be affected.

What collections materials can be treated this way?

Many collecting institutions routinely quarantine, inspect, and clean items entering the museum to avoid introducing insect pests to the rest of the collection. Some items are relatively easy to inspect, and may not need quarantining. Others, such as those with complex structures with hidden areas, are difficult to thoroughly inspect. In these cases, isolating by bagging and monitoring is a useful procedure.

General procedures

- Typically, the item is placed on a white sheet – blotter paper, paper board, or tissue, or foam – and then sealed in a polyethylene bag.
- Over a period of several weeks or months, the item can be monitored for signs of infestation, which will be more visible on the white sheet. These signs can include the presence of live adults, cast-off larvae skins, or deposits of frass, webbing or casings.
- If the type of insect is known, then refer to the literature and determine the life cycle and ensure that the amount of isolation time covers the time needed for adults to hatch.