



# CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE AGENCY, GUAM

Guam's First Line of Defense | Protecting Our Island, Our People, and Our Resources

---

*Director's Office*

*Director of Customs – Ike. Q. Peredo  
Chief of Customs – Vincent S.N. Perez*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 22, 2024**

## **Guam Customs Officers Intercept Kava Roots with Nematodes, Mangoes, Mango Seeds**

BARRIGADA, Guam – Officers with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA) recently intercepted airline passenger baggage containing prohibited or regulated goods on separate occasions.

### **Root-Knot Nematodes**

Officers with CQA's Biosecurity Task Force (BSTF) inspected a passenger's checked-in box of kava roots off a flight originating from Chuuk on March 26 at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Guam Plant Inspection Facility.

Upon further examination by BSTF officers, in partnership with a local plant pathologist, it was discovered the roots contained significant amounts of root-knot nematodes, or *Meloidogyne incognita*, a species that had yet to be documented locally as infective to kava roots. Nematode eggs were also found within the roots.

After consultation with local and federal authorities, the roots were seized by CQA and destroyed.

### **Mangoes, Mango Seeds**

Detector Dog Bullseye with CQA's Agriculture Canine Unit (ACU) alerted his handler after detecting the odor of mango on an airline passenger originating from the Philippines on May 13 in the baggage claim area of the A.B. Won Pat International Airport.

Further inspection of the passenger revealed 3.5 pounds of fresh mangoes within the passenger's backpack and two mango seeds within his pockets.

Within the same week, the ACU's Detector Dog Pippin alerted his handler to a passenger carrying up to 5 pounds of vacuum sealed mangoes within their luggage upon arrival to CQA's primary counters at the airport. This passenger also came off a flight originating from the Philippines.

The mangoes seized during both instances were destroyed, as they are prohibited entry to Guam.

Mangoes from abroad can carry the mango seed weevil, or *Sternochetus mangiferae*, an insect pest that burrows within mango seeds and causes reduced seed germination, damaged fruit pulp, and premature fruit drop, among various other harmful pests and plant illnesses.

All travelers entering Guam are required to declare meats; fruits; vegetables; plants; seeds; soil; animals; and plant and animal products, to include soup or soup products, they are carrying. The declaration must cover such items carried in checked baggage, carry-on luggage, or in a vehicle.

These interceptions were made as part of CQA's preventive measures to preserve Guam's flora, fauna, agricultural capabilities, and environmental resilience.

CQA enforces hundreds of local and federal laws and regulations, screening passengers, cargo, and conveyances at Guam's borders and ports of entry to interdict drugs, various contraband, criminals, invasive species and pests, and diseases in the legitimate facilitation of trade, commerce, and travel.

For more information, contact CQA Public Information Officer Alana Chargualaf-Afaisen at [alana.c.afaisen@cqa.guam.gov](mailto:alana.c.afaisen@cqa.guam.gov) or 671-971-1408.

###