

February 6, 2014

**Little Fire Ant –
DOA Certificate of Inspection Required for All Hāpu‘u (including Hāpu‘u Logs)**

Dear Valued Customer,

As part of the critical effort to control the little red fire ant (LFA), Young Brothers will require, effective immediately, that all Hāpu‘u (Hawaiian tree fern) be accompanied by a Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) certification of inspection. Young Brothers will not accept Hāpu‘u (whether live or otherwise, including all Hāpu‘u plants, logs and Hāpu‘u to be used as a planting medium) for interisland shipment unless it is accompanied by an HDOA certification of inspection.

As part of our responsibility of environmental stewardship, Young Brothers works with public and private entities to prevent the transport of invasive species between islands. As you are likely aware, LFA are stinging ants (about 1/16 inch long, red-orange in color and slow-moving). They are new to Hawaii and spreading. On the east side of the Big Island, LFA are widespread between lower Puna and Laupāhoehoe and infestations have been reported on other islands. As part of controlling this pest, new infestations should be reported immediately to the Department of Agriculture by calling 643-PEST or, in Hilo, 989-9289.

LFA are found both on the ground and in vegetation. Plants, in particular, must be carefully inspected before transporting as plants have a high risk of carrying a nesting population of LFA. LFA can climb into plants of all sizes, including trees, and easily fall off when the plants are disturbed, such as by pruning, harvesting fruit or picking flowers. LFA may also be found on car tires if the vehicle has been parked in an infested area.

Live Hāpu‘u plants, like all live plants, currently require an HDOA certification of inspection before they will be accepted by Young Brothers for interisland shipment. However, experience has shown that Hāpu‘u logs (and Hāpu‘u sold as planting mediums) are also high risk for carrying nesting populations of LFA. For that reason, as noted, Young Brothers will require, effective immediately, that all Hāpu‘u, whether live or otherwise, including all Hāpu‘u plants, logs and Hāpu‘u in any other form, be accompanied by an HDOA certification of inspection.

We appreciate your participation and cooperation to protect the environment in all of our communities.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Matthew J. Humphrey
Matthew J. Humphrey
Vice President and General Manager