Front Cover photograph: *Acharia stimulea* (Saddle back caterpillar).
You may not be aware that there are rules relating to the import, movement and keeping of live invertebrates in Great Britain.

These rules detail which species may or may not be imported or kept. To help ensure you are not importing or keeping any invertebrates that could cause damage to plant health Defra has produced an Explanatory Leaflet summarising these rules which can be read on-line at: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/phealth/phi8.pdf

This guide is intended to provide a summary of the Explanatory Leaflet issued by Defra.

Why do we need these rules?

There are many plant pests around the world that have the potential to become established in Great Britain. If established, these pests could pose a serious threat to both agricultural crops and other plants. Official controls on the import, movement and keeping of plant pests are therefore in place to prevent this from happening.

Similar controls also exist to protect both amenity and forestry trees.

What is a plant pest?

Loosely speaking, a plant pest is an organism that feeds on, damages or transmits diseases to plants.

Or,

Any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products.

Which invertebrates cannot be imported?

As it is impractical to maintain an up to date list of prohibited invertebrates, the guide provides examples of either individual species or families of species which may or may not be imported live. Generally speaking, you may not import any plant-feeding invertebrate
not normally present in Great Britain and which is likely to have the potential to damage plants and/or trees here. If you are not sure whether an invertebrate may be legally imported please contact Defra Plant Health Division at the address given at the end of this leaflet.

Determining if a species would become a plant pest if introduced into Great Britain is not easy.

For example,

Rothschildia orizaba

Actias luna

©The Natural History Museum, London
looking at the two moth species opposite, it is tempting to assume that as they are both from warm exotic locations neither of them would require a Defra plant health licence to be imported. However recent risk assessments for both species show that while *Rothschildia orizaba* is unlikely to become a plant pest in Great Britain, *Actias luna* does have the potential to become a plant pest and as such would require a licence to be imported.

**Moving and keeping invertebrates in Great Britain**

Official plant health controls also cover the movement and keeping of non-indigenous plant pests within Great Britain and it is an offence to knowingly keep, sell or release any live species suspected of being a plant pest.

**Licensed imports**

Licences may be granted by Defra to allow the import and keeping of prohibited invertebrate plant pests.

**Invertebrates not covered by plant health restrictions**

Any live terrestrial invertebrate that does not feed on plants may be imported without a plant health licence, although there are other restrictions that you may need to comply with.

Dead invertebrate material may be imported without a plant health licence.
You should also be aware that the following restrictions may apply:

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

This convention covers species which are considered to be rare or at risk from extinction in the wild and the legislation relating to this convention includes several invertebrate species which may not be imported. **Enquiries to:**

Defra, Global Wildlife Division,  
First Floor Temple Quay House,  
2 The Square, Temple Quay,  
Bristol, BS1 6EB.  

Tel: 0117 3728168  
Fax: 0117 3728206  
E-mail: cites.ukma@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Prohibits the release into the wild of any species not native to Great Britain. This means that you can import some non-native species but you must ensure that they are securely contained to prevent their escape. **Enquiries to:**

Defra, Wildlife Species Conservation Division  
First Floor Temple Quay House,  
2 The Square, Temple Quay,  
Bristol, BS1 6EB.  

Tel: 0117 3726154  
Fax: 0117 3728688  
E-mail: species@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

This act details potentially dangerous animals for which a licence is required if they are kept as pets. Several scorpion and spider species are covered by this act. **Enquiries to:**

Defra, Global Wildlife Division,
First Floor Temple Quay House,
2 The Square, Temple Quay,
Bristol, BS1 6EB.

Tel: 0117 3728503
Fax: 0117 3728182
E-mail: exoticzoos@defra.gsi.gov.uk

The Explanatory Leaflet on Importing Invertebrate Plant Pests

To get a copy of the Explanatory Leaflet on Importing Invertebrate Plant Pests, or if you have any questions please contact:

Defra, Plant Health Service Delivery Unit
Plant Health Division, Room 340,
Foss House, Kings Pool,
1-2 Peasholme Green,
York, YO41 2PX

Tel. 01904 455174
E-mail: planthealth.info@defra.gsi.gov.uk

This guide can also be viewed on-line at www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pub1.htm