Breadcrumb

1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

International Traveler: Plants, Plant Parts, Cut Flowers, and Seeds

Last Modified:

The United States restricts or prohibits the entry of many agricultural products, which can carry foreign pests and diseases that harm American agriculture and our environment. Help us keep American agriculture healthy by following the guidance on this page about products you may want to bring into the United States.

Travelers entering the United States must declare all agricultural or wildlife products.

Travelers entering the United States must declare all agricultural or wildlife products to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials. You must also tell them if you visited a farm or were in contact with animals before traveling to the United States.

U.S. agricultural inspectors will examine your items to be sure they meet entry requirements and do not harbor harmful foreign pests or diseases. U.S. inspectors have the authority to make a final determination about whether your products can enter the country. We recommend that you keep receipts and original packaging of agricultural products as proof of their country of origin.

As long as you declare all of the agricultural products you are bringing with you, you will not face any penalties—even if an inspector determines

that they cannot enter the country.

Plants and Seeds that You CAN and CANNOT Bring Back to the United States

Expand All

General Guidance

Many plants, plant parts and seeds from foreign countries may enter the United States provided they meet certain requirements to prevent the introduction of plant pests and diseases. These requirements vary depending on the type of plant, whether you are bringing the whole plant or just parts of the plant, the country of origin, and its intended use. Travelers should plan ahead because you may need to obtain a permit or other official documents, which can take up to 30 business days to process. To determine the specific requirements for your situation, please contact APHIS' Plant Import Information Line at 877-770-5990 (toll-free) or by email at plantproducts.permits@usda.gov.

Plants and Plant Parts for Growing (Nursery Stock, Roots, Bulbs, etc.)

Plants in soil are prohibited.

Travelers may bring 12 or fewer bare-rooted plants (no soil, sand, earth, or other growing media) if they meet the following conditions:

- The plants are not otherwise prohibited, protected under the Endangered Species Act or Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or subject to any special restrictions, such as post-entry quarantine or treatment
- You have a phytosanitary certificate issued by the National Plant Protection Organization of the country you are leaving indicating the plants are free of

pests and diseases
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspects the plants at the first port of entry and determines they are free of pests and diseases and meet all entry requirements

Travelers may wrap plants in damp newspaper or similar material to prevent them from drying out. Roots may be secured in a plastic bag.

Travelers who want to bring 13 or more plants must obtain an import permit from APHIS and mail or ship the plants directly to the nearest USDA Plant Inspection Station. You may not hand carry 13 or more plants into the country. All costs to move or treat the plants (should USDA detect any pests or diseases) will be at the expense of the importer.

Please call APHIS' Plant Import Information Line at 877-770-5990 (toll-free) or by email at plantproducts.permits@usda.gov.

Seeds

Seeds from trees and shrubs are prohibited in passenger baggage.

Travelers may bring seeds of admissible herbaceous plants for planting if they meet the following conditions:

- The seeds are not otherwise prohibited, protected under the Endangered Species Act or Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or subject to any special restrictions, such as post-entry quarantine or treatment*
- You have a phytosanitary certificate issued by the National Plant Protection Organization of the country you are leaving indicating the seeds are free of pests and diseases
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspects the seeds at the first port of entry and determines they are free of pests and diseases and meet all entry requirements

*Please call APHIS' Plant Import Information Line at 877-770-5990 (toll-free) or by email at plantproducts.permits@usda.gov.

Fresh Cut Flowers and Greenery

Fresh cut flowers and greenery must be presented to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the first port of entry for inspection. If the CBP agricultural specialist or officer finds harmful plant pests or diseases on your cut flowers or greenery or determines that the items do not meet entry requirements, they may refuse entry. Some cut flowers and greenery may have to meet additional requirements for entry into the United States if they are edible, may be planted and grown, or if they are from endangered or protected plant species. For more information, please contact APHIS' Plant Import Information Line at 877-770-5990 (toll-free) or by email at plantproducts.permits@usda.gov.

Need Help?

If you can't find your commodity listed above, browse the Agricultural Import Requirements Database.

If you still have questions about a particular plant or plant products (fruits, vegetables, plant parts, seeds, soil, or souvenirs made from wood or plants), contact us.

Phone: 877-770-5990 (toll-free)

Email: plantproducts.permits@usda.gov

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