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What Plant Material Requires a Permit?

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APHIS regulates the importation of plants, plant products, and other items that could introduce plant pests into the United States. Regulated items include plants for planting; seeds; plant products such as fruits and vegetables, timber, cotton, and cut flowers; protected plants and plant products; threatened and endangered plant species; plant material for research; and more.

How To Find Plant and Plant Product Requirements

The requirements for importing plants and plant products vary depending on the specific commodity and the country of origin. They may also change over time or if there is an outbreak of a certain pest or disease in a country.

You can look up the requirements for specific commodities in our [Agricultural Commodity Import Requirements](#) (ACIR) database.

Did You Know These Items Are Regulated?

You may not realize that certain commodities pose a plant pest risk or are protected and are therefore regulated. Some examples are:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Plants for planting
- All seeds for planting and some seeds for consumption
- Protected plants and plant products (such as orchids)
- Plants and seeds of certain threatened or endangered species
- Cut flowers and bouquets
- Cotton and cotton products (not including yarn, thread, or cloth)
- Wood and wood products, including:
 - Logs, lumber, and other unmanufactured wood products
 - Handicrafts from China that are made of or include wood, including carvings, baskets, boxes, bird houses, rustic garden and patio furniture, potpourri, artificial trees, trellis towers, garden fencing and edging, picture frames, holiday decorations, pens and pencils, wooden decorative collectibles, and wooden utensils
- Soil, soil amendments, and rocks

Always Check With APHIS

The list above includes some less commonly known regulated plant products. It is **not** a complete list of all regulated plants and plant products. Be sure to check the [ACIR database](#) or our commodity import manuals for your commodity.

Learn More

Find more information about importing plants and plant products on our [how to import](#) page.

Why Does APHIS Regulate Plant Products?

Many plant pests and diseases that could harm our Nation's agricultural and natural resources do not exist in the United States. Plants and plant products can carry these pests and diseases into our country. In some cases, the plant or commodity itself may be a pest (for example, [noxious weeds](#), [parasitic plants](#), and [pest organisms](#)). Our regulations safeguard U.S. plant health by keeping pests and

diseases out of the United States.

The risk to U.S. agriculture is real. For example, rice plants are attacked by many pests and diseases. If one of these pests enters the United States, it could cause extreme damage to the billion-dollar U.S. rice industry. U.S. forest resources are also at risk. For instance, APHIS has found destructive wood-boring insects in artificial Christmas trees made with real wood trunks. These insects are similar to the [Asian longhorned beetle](#), an invasive pest we're fighting to eliminate in several States. There are no treatments that will kill these insects once they attack a tree, so the tree must be cut down and the wood destroyed.

In addition, many plants are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). To uphold these laws and support plant health conservation, APHIS enforces regulations for the [import and export of endangered plant species](#).

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