

4

Export Program
Manual

Special Procedures

Commodity • Plants in Growing Media

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Introduction

These special procedures explain the acceptable production and sanitation practices nurseries may establish and maintain for plants in growing media destined to the European Union. (See also the export summary for European Union.) These special procedures include those for certifying plants in containers from Florida destined to the European Union.

PPQ's position is that if plants in growing media (may include soil in its entirety or in part) have been grown under sound production procedures, phytosanitary export certification of these plants will provide the European Union with protection against noxious organisms (within the confines of the certifying statement on PPQ Form 577) and will adequately satisfy our obligation to international plant protection. Therefore, Authorized Certification Officials (ACOs) are authorized to issue PPQ Form 577 for plants in growing media to the European Union. That authorization is based on evidence that the plants were prepared according to the procedures of production and sanitation described in these special procedures.



Do not follow these special procedures to certify plants in growing media if the plants are destined to the French overseas departments of French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Reunion. Follow the import requirements listed in EXCERPT for plant shipments offered for export to these French overseas departments.

Greenhouse Grown Nursery Stock

Greenhouse grown nursery stock **must** be grown under production and sanitation procedures as follows:

1. Nursery routinely disinfects the flats, benches, soil bins, and tools.
2. Plant cuttings are derived from healthy parent stock.
3. Plants are transplanted or repotted to sterile growing media (see *Procedures to Certify Plants in Containers from Florida to the European Union* on **page 4-4-3**).
4. If established plants are moved outdoors from a greenhouse, the plants **must** be transferred to raised benches or to plastic sheeting on the ground.
5. Seeds and cuttings are rooted in sterile media in a greenhouse (see *Procedures to Certify Plants in Containers from Florida to the European Union* on **page 4-4-3**).
6. Plants contained in the shipment have been sampled and found to be negative for *Radopholus similis* (burrowing nematode), or are certified as originating in an area where *Radopholus similis* is **not** known to occur.
7. Shipments are supported by State phytosanitary certificates that attest to the conformity with the above procedures. State phytosanitary certificates **must** be converted to PPQ Form 577 before export.

Field Grown Nursery Stock

Field grown nursery stock **must** be grown under production and sanitation procedures as follows.

1. Containerized (potted) plants intended for export to the European Union **must** be segregated from other nursery stock and held in a readily identifiable area of the nursery until shipment.
2. *Corynebacterium sepedonicum* (potato bacterial ring rot) and *Globodera rostochiensis* (golden nematode) are **not** known to occur at the place of production.
3. Field grown nursery stock are to be washed completely free from soil in an area of the nursery where contamination of other nursery stock, sterile growing media, and holding areas will be avoided. The washing is to be done using clean water under pressure.
4. Nursery routinely disinfects the flats, benches, soil bins, and tools.

5. Nursery operator **must** give 48 hours advance notice to the ACO when a root washing and repotting operation is to begin. The ACO will decide whether to conduct random spot checks or to inspect the entire preparation process.
6. Plants **must** originate in a nursery currently inspected and certified by the plant regulatory branch of the State agriculture department.
7. If known to be hosts of *Radopholus similis* (burrowing nematode) or if host status is unknown, the plants contained in the shipment **must** be sampled and found to be negative for *Radopholus similis*, or certified as originating in an area where *Radopholus similis* is **not** known to occur.
8. Plants are to be transplanted into clean containers using sterile growing media (see *Procedures to Certify Plants in Containers from Florida to the European Union* on **page 4-4-3**). The containers are to be transferred to raised benches or to plastic sheeting on the ground.
9. Shipments are supported by State phytosanitary certificates that attest to the conformity with the above procedures. State phytosanitary certificates **must** be converted to PPQ Form 577 before the export.

Procedures to Certify Plants in Containers from Florida to the European Union

State plant regulatory officials (SPROs) in Florida use a specific tagging procedure to certify containerized plants as containing approved growing media and as free of *Radopholus similis* (burrowing nematode). The tagging is done annually at the time of burrowing nematode certification. See also *Approved Growing Media* on **page 4-4-4**.

All plants potted in containers 21 inches or larger intended for export to European Union **must** be tagged by the Division of Plant Industry (DPI), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Untagged plants in containers 21 inches or larger **will not** be certified to the European Union.

Tags read “Eligible for EU Certification.” SPROs write on each tag the date the plant was certified free of *Radopholus similis* (burrowing nematode), which is valid for 1 year. The tags **only** indicate that the plants are eligible for certification; that is, the plants were potted in approved growing media and were free of burrowing nematode. The plants will still need to meet the phytosanitary import requirements of the European Union at the time of export certification.

Tags are made of durable yellow plastic (5 x 2-11/16 inches) and are attached to the plant with a DPI plastic-numbered seal. There is a fee for each tag with seal; therefore, when an additional seal is needed for a large diameter trunk, there will be an additional fee.

Acceptable Sterile Media

For the purpose of supporting the nursery production and sanitation practices and containerized plant procedures described above, acceptable sterile media **must** be one of the following.

1. Growing medium that has been uniformly pasteurized by using aerated steam at 140 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes or by using live steam at 180 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes. Pasteurization should be conducted using premoistened media and should ensure the densest portion receives the minimum temperature for the full 30 minutes.
2. Growing medium having component parts of unused peat (peat commercially harvested from a bog **not** previously used as farmland or any other agricultural purpose), clean sand, nonconiferous sawdust, or wood shavings (free of bark), and biologically inert fillers such as perlite or vermiculite. ACOs will determine if the growing media is acceptable for this category. Determination will be based on the ACO's observation and judgment of the sanitary practices used to store, handle, and use the growing media components by the formulator or the nursery.



Growing media that falls outside the two categories listed above will **not** be eligible for certification. However, if the growing media appears to satisfy the general sterility requirement, the sterilizing process should be referred to PPQ Export Services (ES) for approval.

Approved Growing Media

Approved growing media for plants destined to the European Union are as follows:

- ◆ Biologically inert fillers (perlite, vermiculite, etc.)
- ◆ Clean sand
- ◆ Melaleuca
- ◆ Peat, unused that has been commercially harvested from a bog **not** previously used for farmland or for any other agricultural purpose
- ◆ Sawdust, nonconiferous
- ◆ Wood shavings or wood chips, bark free

Prohibited Growing Media

Prohibited growing media for plants destined to the European Union include isolated bark components and sawdust of the following genera:

- ◆ *Acer saccharum* (sugar maple)
- ◆ *Castanea* (chestnut)
- ◆ Coniferae (conifers including the more common genera of *Abies* (fir), *Larix* (larch), *Picea* (spruce), *Pinus* (pine), *Pseudotsuga* (Douglas-fir), and *Tsuga* (hemlock))
- ◆ *Populus* (poplar)
- ◆ *Quercus* (oak)
- ◆ *Ulmus* (elm)

