



## **RHS Shows Biosecurity Policy & Regulations 2026**

**Regulations must be followed by all associated staff, exhibitors, suppliers and contractors.**

**All plants and cut flowers intended for use or sale should be visibly free from pests and diseases.**

Biosecurity and plant health inspections take place at all shows. Plants (living plants, cut flowers and parts thereof) which do not meet regulations or are found to be unhealthy may be removed at the discretion of the RHS.

For any Biosecurity and Plant Health enquiries please contact [showsplanthealth@rhs.org.uk](mailto:showsplanthealth@rhs.org.uk)

## **RHS Shows & Venues Biosecurity Policy** \*Abridged version, full version available upon request

At RHS Shows and Venues, plants and cut flowers, originating from the UK, Europe and other continents are brought together, posing a unique biosecurity risk. To mitigate this risk and protect RHS Show and Garden sites, horticultural trades and UK biodiversity the RHS has developed specific Biosecurity Regulations. These are designed to minimise the risk of introducing harmful and invasive organisms and the threat of them spreading within and beyond an RHS Show or Garden site.

## **Sourcing Plants & Cut Flowers**

When selecting a plant or cut flower supplier it is important to consider:

- Reputation for quality and plant health, e.g. is the supplier Plant Healthy certified?
- Previous history supplying RHS Shows
- Where the majority of plants or cut flowers will originate from, e.g. imported or UK grown?

Exhibitors and contractors should work with suppliers to ensure that all plants have been monitored on a UK nursery for a minimum of 3 months during a growing season, in particular imported woody plants (trees, shrubs, hedging, palms, tree ferns).

Please ensure that suppliers do not deliver poor quality or visibly unhealthy plants or cut flowers to RHS Show sites.

**If directly importing plants or cut flowers** please use the following link for information on the relevant import rules and pest and disease risks: [gov.uk/guidance/check-plant-health-information-and-import-rules](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-plant-health-information-and-import-rules)

## **Sourcing Dead Plant Material (Felled/ fallen trunks, stumps, logs, leaf litter)**

Always obtain permission from the landowner before collecting dead plant material. Removing material without consent may be illegal and can damage habitats that support biodiversity.

Dead plant material collected from woodlands, parklands and private gardens has the potential to host hidden harmful pests and diseases. When sourcing dead plant material please check the following with the landowner or supplier:

- **Is a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) in place?** Check with the landowner that there is no SPHN in place, moving dead plant material from land under a SPHN is illegal.
- **Is a UK Plant Passport needed?** Wood of certain plant species (e.g. walnut, sweet chestnut) must be plant passported before it is moved. To check if this applies click [here](#).
- **Has the wood been cleaned?** Ensure trunks, logs and stumps are free from foliage and detritus (e.g. soil, leaf litter, honey fungus rhizomorphs).

\***Spruce (*Picea*)** wood and plants are subject to strict restrictions, see '*Spruce (Picea) & Ips typographus*).

## **Biosecurity Regulations**

### **UK Plant Passports** \*Does not apply to cut flowers

The UK plant passport scheme applies to professional operators supplying (selling, hiring, loaning, gifting) plants to other professional operators, or distance selling plants. Only registered professional operators can issue UK plant passports, e.g. nurseries, design, landscaping and gardening businesses, horticultural societies. The RHS is a registered professional operator.

To register visit: [gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-become-a-plant-health-professional-operator](http://gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-become-a-plant-health-professional-operator)

**Exhibitors selling plants** must meet UK plant passport requirements:

- Plants sold to visitors on a show site do not require a plant passport.
- Plants sold to visitors for delivery (e.g. mail order) require a plant passport.
- Plants sold to another professional operator (e.g. horticultural business) require a plant passport.

All professional operators should keep UK plant passport records for 3 years.

### **Woody Plants 3m high & above (Trees, shrubs, hedging, palms, tree ferns)**

Imported woody plants 3m high & above pose an increased risk of introducing new pests and diseases into the UK, in comparison to smaller plants. Large canopies, trunks and root balls make thorough plant health inspections difficult. Please adhere to the following:

- **Plant list submission:** Please include size, country of origin and supplier name for all woody plants 3m high & above.
- **Supplier plant health checks:** Please ensure that suppliers check the health of woody plants 3m high & above in advance of plants arriving on a show site. See 'Sourcing Plants & Cut Flowers'.
- Reject woody plants with bore holes (entry & exit), 2-3mm and larger.
- Reject woody plants with bleeds and/ or discoloured bark.
- Fully UK grown woody plants are preferred, e.g. grown in the UK from UK origin seed or cuttings.

### **Xylella fastidiosa high-risk hosts** \*Does not currently apply to cut flowers

*Xylella fastidiosa* is a bacterial disease of global concern, it is known to infect over 600 plant species, causing decline in health and death, there is no cure.

*Xylella* is not yet in the UK but imported high-risk host plants pose the greatest risk of introducing it.

**The following high-risk hosts must not be used or sold** at RHS Shows:

*Olea europaea* (olive), *Nerium oleander* (oleander), *Polygala myrtifolia* (myrtle-leaf milkwort), *Coffea* spp. (coffee), *Spartium junceum* (Spanish broom)

**The following high-risk hosts can be used or sold** at RHS Shows if grown from UK origin cuttings/ seed or, if imported, have a UK plant passport showing origin as GB:

*Lavandula* spp. (lavender), *Salvia rosmarinus* (rosemary), *Prunus dulcis* (almond), shrubby *Veronica* spp. (formerly *Hebe*)

UK plant passports can be found on pot labels and invoices, section D shows the country of origin.



### **Tobacco whitefly**

Tobacco whitefly (*Bemisia tabacci*) can cause severe feeding damage and transmit over 110 different viruses. Symptoms include chlorotic spotting, growth distortion, leaf drop and crop failure.

Imported tender, tropical, sub-tropical plants and cut flowers should be checked thoroughly for signs of Tobacco whitefly when sourcing. This pest is notifiable, infested plants and cut flowers are subject to immediate destruction.

For images and details: [planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/Bemisia-tabaci-Defra-Plant-Pest-Factsheet-Feb-2017-2.pdf](http://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/assets/factsheets/Bemisia-tabaci-Defra-Plant-Pest-Factsheet-Feb-2017-2.pdf)

### **Spruce (*Picea*) & *Ips typographus***

*Ips typographus* (eight-toothed spruce bark beetle) feeds on live but significantly weakened spruce trees and will infest healthy trees if the population is high. Outbreaks in Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Norfolk and Suffolk have been caused by beetles blown in from the continent.

In 2024 the demarcated area (DMA) expanded to cover East Anglia as well as South East England, the rest of the UK is a Pest Free Area (PFA).

**Chelsea Flower Show & Sandringham Flower Show** sit within the DMA.

- Allowed: *Picea* spp. under 3m but only with permission from the Forestry Commission to move to and from a show site.
- Prohibited: *Picea* spp. felled/ fallen trees, logs and other material.

**Malvern Spring Festival & Badminton Flower Show** sit within the PFA.

- Allowed: *Picea* spp. of any size but must not originate from the DMA.
- Avoid: *Picea* spp. felled/ fallen trees, logs and other material where bark remains. If essential to the exhibit this material must not originate from the DMA.

For further information visit: [gov.uk/government/news/new-restrictions-to-limit-impact-of-ips-typographus-tree-pest](http://gov.uk/government/news/new-restrictions-to-limit-impact-of-ips-typographus-tree-pest)

### **Oak (*Quercus*) & Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)**

OPM (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) arrived in the UK on imported trees in 2005. The caterpillars feed on oak species causing severe defoliation, impacting tree health. Hairs on the caterpillar can cause severe eye, skin and respiratory irritation in humans and animals.

OPM is established in Greater London and the home counties, known as the Established Area. A Buffer Zone with a 10km Exclusion Zone surround this area to control further spread.

**Chelsea Flower Show** sits within the OPM Established Area. All Oak (*Quercus*) species of any size are prohibited from both shows, to comply with UK legislation which prevents spread into the UK Pest Free Area. \*Also applies to cut Oak with foliage.

**Malvern Spring Festival, Badminton Flower Show & Sandringham Flower Show** sit within the Pest Free Area, therefore all oak (*Quercus*) species of any size can be exhibited at both shows. Please be vigilant for this pest when sourcing oak trees.

For further information visit: [forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/oak-processionary-moth-thaumetopoea-processionea/](https://forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/oak-processionary-moth-thaumetopoea-processionea/)