

Note import restrictions when buying plants from abroad

Strict restrictions for imports from outside the EU

Importing and ordering plants and fresh plant products from outside the EU involves various restrictions. By complying with them, you can protect your garden plot and the EU as a whole from invasive alien plant diseases and pests.

If you are planning to buy seedlings, seeds, cuttings or similar from outside the EU, read instructions on the Finnish Food Authority's website (links below). All plants, seeds, cut flowers and fresh vegetables intended for planting imported from outside the EU require a phytosanitary certificate. Travellers cannot usually obtain the certificate. You can order products from online shops outside the EU by following the Finnish Food Authority's instructions, but such imports involve an inspection subject to a separate charge.

Only a few restrictions for imports from the EU

As a rule, plants and propagation materials can be imported into Finland from the EU without any restrictions. However, stricter requirements have been set for fire blight hosts (such as apple and pear trees) and seed potatoes. They can only be imported from another EU Member State if they carry a protected zone (PZ) plant passport. However, PZ plant passports are not usually available for plants sold to consumers in other EU Member States. This means that fire blight hosts and seed potatoes must be bought domestically.

Even though seedlings and other propagation materials can be imported into Finland from the EU, they should be bought from professional garden centres. They supervise production and inspect their products for any plant diseases and pests.

Other tips to prevent the spread of plant diseases and pests

Certified seed potatoes must always be used in potato production, as they have been tested for plant diseases. Certified seed potatoes can be identified from the certificate attached to the packaging. By using certified seed potatoes, you can prevent harmful soil pests such as potato cyst nematodes, the potato wart disease and potato ring rot from spreading to garden plots. They can survive in the soil for decades.

Also consider where to buy seeds for seedling production. Do not use the seeds of tomatoes and peppers bought from a store. They may contain seed-borne plant diseases such as the tomato brown rugose fruit virus. In addition, products grown from shop tomatoes and peppers may not necessarily have the same traits as their parents, as the variety may be an F1 hybrid. There may be differences in the flavour or growth of fruit, or in resistance to diseases. To get what you want, buy seeds from a garden centre.

Quarantine pests may cause significant financial losses for agriculture and forestry, as well as ecosystems, and their populations must always be eradicated. Learn to identify the most common plant diseases and pests, and notify the Finnish Food Authority immediately of any suspected quarantine pests. The earlier control measures are taken, the more probable it is to succeed in the eradication of pests.

More information about ordering plants is available here:

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/plants/puutarhakasvit/home-gardeners/ordering-plants-online/>

More information about importing plants and fresh plant products from outside the EU as personal luggage is available here:

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/plants/puutarhakasvit/home-gardeners/importing-plants-as-luggage/>

More information about fire blight is available here (in Finnish):

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/kasvit/kasvitaudit-ja-tuholaiset/kasvintuhoojahaku/karanteenituhoojat/tulipolte>

More information about the tomato brown rugose fruit virus is available here (in Finnish):

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/kasvit/kasvitaudit-ja-tuholaiset/kasvintuhoojahaku/karanteenituhoojat/tomaatin-ruskokurttuvirus/>

More information about quarantine pests is available here (in Finnish):

<https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/kasvit/kasvitaudit-ja-tuholaiset/kasvintuhoojahaku/>