

## Plant Passports – an outline guide

EU Single Market plant health checks are focused on the place of production. There are no border checks, but spot checks may take place anywhere in the trade chain. Material which hosts the most serious (“quarantine”) pests and diseases requires a plant passport to facilitate its movement. Once the person responsible on a nursery has checked the plants are free from a set list of quarantine plant pests and diseases, the nursery issues a plant passport which enables movement of those regulated plants within the EU Single Market.

The plant passport enables plant health agencies to track plant batches (so they can be recalled if necessary), shows the plants have met the plant passporting conditions and help the purchaser to learn any particular information about the plants (e.g. the passport will tell you if the plant is EU or non-EU origin, and if the plant is from outside the EU, the passport will state the country of origin).

Additionally:

- Plant passports, where required, must accompany material moved within and between EU Member States; even if trade is restricted to the UK. The plant passport provides **assurance** that a plant has been grown at authorised premises and inspected for quarantine pest and diseases by the grower’s person responsible and annually by an inspector from APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency).
- The plant passport information must accompany the plants at movement and the supplier must provide the purchaser with the full plant passport. The delivery note is often used as the plant passport and the plant label often includes the suppliers registration number rather than the full plant passport information.
- As plants travel through the EU supply chain they may retain their original plant passport, or be issued with replacement passports, depending on how they are handled by the interim suppliers.
- If a supplier does any kind of ‘**growing on**’ of purchased passported plants, they will not be able to re-sell the plants unless they are authorised by the appropriate plant health agency to issue a plant passport. ‘Growing on’ includes re-potting, grafting, and growing under protection or outside for a significant period.
- When a trader splits or mixes plants for sale or movement where the plants have already been passported, a plant passport is required for onward movement of the plant. In these circumstances, a replacement passport bearing the marking “RP” (replacement passport) must be issued.
- The supplier should make it easy for the purchaser to understand which plants require a passport and which do not (so indiscriminately putting the growers registration number onto every plant is not very helpful). If a supplier fails to provide a passport for plants which require one, or if the required information is incomplete, this should be reported to APHA.
- The plant passport is represented as a code in a specific format eg:  
**EU Plant passport UK/EW 34567/WK1/ZP/RP12345/Botanical Name/Number of Plants in Consignment/County of Origin**, where:
  - **UK/EW 34567** - the supplier’s APHA registration number showing that the supplier is authorised by the UK’s plant health agency to issue plant passports.
  - **WK1** - unique batch code

- **/ZP** - protected zone e.g. selling *Quercus* sp. in UK
  - **/RP 12345** - Replacement Passport, a RP must be issued when plants are 'grown on' in the UK for at least one season, or if batches are spilt/mixed, before sale
  - **/Botanical Name/Number of Plants in Consignment**
  - **/County of Origin** if outside the EU
- A Protected Zone (PZ) is a designated area of higher plant health status than normal and helps protect certain areas against set quarantine plant pests and diseases. The PZ plant passport can only be issued by authorised suppliers who have met the higher status required. For example, *Quercus* must be free from Oak Processionary Moth to enter the PZ.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/621784/plant-passports-protected-zones.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/621784/plant-passports-protected-zones.pdf) . Recent additions on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 are at  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/663856/plant-passports-protected-zones-0118.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663856/plant-passports-protected-zones-0118.pdf)
  - It is good practice for purchasers to **check Plant Passport information** (i.e. complete/valid?), and **maintain an audit trail** of plant's destination and health check records after planting out (i.e. allowing APHA to recall infected plant batches). It is also the responsibility of the purchaser to retain the plant passport information for one year but for *Xylella fastidiosa* hosts for 3 years.
  - It is important to note that **Plant Passports do not guarantee that plants are pest and disease free**. Some diseases (such as *Xylella*) can remain dormant for a number of years.

In the last few years a new quarantine disease called *Xylella fastidiosa* has occurred in some EU Member States initiating new controls. A new plant passporting obligation for all 'professional operators' has been introduced, which requires that the movement of all *Xylella fastidiosa* 'host plants' across the EU must be accompanied by a plant passport. Hence **anyone** (including landscapers, designers, retailers) **directly importing host plants of *Xylella fastidiosa* is now subject to the same stringent measures as growers and suppliers.**

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant\\_health\\_biosecurity/legislation/emergency\\_measures/xylella-fastidiosa\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/xylella-fastidiosa_en) <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/high-profile-pests-and-diseases/xylella/>

Purchasing plants with plant passports issued by a UK supplier reduces biosecurity risk. These suppliers will be subject to regular checks by APHA to ensure they continue to meet standards for growing pest and disease free plants

**Very high biosecurity risk is associated with importing very large plants with large rootballs of soil direct from overseas to urban sites. The risk is reduced if such plants are imported to a UK nursery and quarantined there for at least a year.**

**The most effective measure to reduce the risk of introducing pests and diseases is to purchase plants from UK nurseries which have been propagated from UK plant material or UK seed and grown only in UK.**