

## Planning to purchase orchids at the World Orchid Congress in Singapore or elsewhere?

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**Step 1:** Read the requirements for Import Permits, Phytosanitary certificates, and for CITES documents as explained in the two accompanying articles: CITES Permit requirements: and BRINGING ORCHIDS INTO CANADA FROM SINGAPORE WORLD ORCHID CONFERENCE, November 2011.

Pay particular attention to requirements for certain states or countries. If there are any questions, please ask for clarification. *\*Singapore is one of several countries having a special arrangement with Canada where a Phytosanitary certificate can also serve as a CITES document. This can only apply to SPECIES listed in Appendix II and to HYBRIDS derived from species listed in any of the Appendices. Additional information is found in the document titled: CITES Permit requirements.*

**Step 2a:** Before planning to purchase orchids at any show outside Canada, check with the show organizers well before you leave and then again, once you arrive. The show organizers should be able to tell you if, when and where inspectors will be at the show to issue papers. Even then, be prepared for surprises and even some disappointment. Inspectors may not be on site while you are there. Inspectors may be unable to issue documents acceptable to Canadian authorities. You may have to pay large sums to obtain documents or perhaps only be able to pay by certified cheque or money/postal order rather than by cash or credit card. Some vendors will not be selling plants eligible for export.

**Step 2b:** Before planning to purchase orchids from any vendor outside Canada, verify that they are willing and able to obtain necessary documents, how much this will cost, and how long the process may take. Keep copies of any documents/permits for inclusion with a shipment.

**Step 3a:** Before the show: Don't leave things to the last minute. Allow plenty of time to obtain your import permit in Canada before you leave.

**Step 3b:** At the show: Leave yourself plenty of time for documents to be prepared at a show. Be prepared for the unexpected.

**Step 4:** Do not be tempted to purchase any plants whose artificially propagated origin could be in doubt. If the condition of the plants suggests that they might be wild in origin, put them aside. Plants appearing as if they are wild collected may be detained by Canadian inspectors until their status is verified.

*Orchids are more readily recognizable as artificially propagated when they do not show any signs of having been collected in the wild such as mechanical damage or strong dehydration resulting from collection, irregular growth and heterogeneous size and shape within a taxon and shipment, algae or other epiphyllous organisms (mosses, lichens, algae, etc.) adhering to leaves, or damage by insects or other pests.*

**Step 5:** Be sure that you have your Canadian import permit and current phytosanitary requirements in hand when you go to obtain your export documents at a show. Please check that documents are in order before leaving the place where certificates are being issued. Verify that dates are correct, and that names and numbers are the same on all documents. All other aspects of the permit, such as importer or consignee name and address, for example, must all be in order for the certificate/permit to be accepted. If documents are being issued in another language than English/French, ask someone to assist you in understanding what is written.

**Step 6:** Numbers count! Any shipment including importations in personal baggage must correspond with what appears on the permit. The numbers and type of species (or hybrid) in the shipment must match or be less than the numbers on the permit.

**Step 7:** Given the current restriction on gels and liquids in hand baggage accompanying airline passengers, most flasks entering Canada by air will have to be carried in checked luggage. Wrap each flask carefully to avoid leakage/breakage. Seedlings that fill a flask and have well developed roots will be less likely to be dislodged during transport. Also, if a flask becomes contaminated during transport, such seedlings are more likely to survive emergency deflasking when you get them home.

**Step 8:** Carry all original documents with you. Make copies. Place copies with the packed orchids travelling as checked baggage. You can provide a note with the copies that you will provide the original documents when needed: provide local contact information. Originals must be provided to Canadian authorities at your Port of Entry.

**Step 9:** Be aware of the mechanism to pre-clear material if making an airport connection within Canada. Details may be found on the COC website titled '[Travellers bringing orchids into Canada](#)'. Travelling through additional countries on the way home can be challenging especially if there are customs inspections during layovers. Bear this in mind when planning your itinerary.

**Step 10:** If you are planning to show plants in another country, you should first contact the organizers for their specific requirements.

## Permits you need

There are challenges to bringing plants back from the Singapore World Orchid Congress, including plant origin and cost. If the purchaser plans to travel through or visit other countries during the return trip, there could be additional challenges. It is strongly recommended that any orchids purchased are of Singapore origin and that appropriately worded documents (for Canadian import purposes) are certain to be available before making any purchase. Contact those vendors beforehand to check this further.

Cost is a factor as you will note from the information provided below.

Note: These guidelines give the expected procedure for the Singapore event but prepare for the unexpected.

Here is what we anticipate you will need:

### 1. A permit to import plants from CANADA (CFIA)

[The import office](#) NEEDS TO HAVE APPLICATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS IT WILL TAKE A FEW WEEKS TO OBTAIN YOUR PERMIT. You can send your completed application from the attached link, above. The permit office suggests that you identify what you propose to bring in at the scientific genus level, e.g. *Cattleya*, *Paphiopedilum*, *Vanda*, *Doritaenopsis*, etc. Common names like moth orchid are not accepted. The permit costs \$35 and takes about 2 weeks to get.

When you get the permit, it will tell you the phytosanitary declarations that the Singapore officials must put on the Phytosanitary certificate. You will need to show this to Canadian officials at border when you come back.

### 2. CITES Import Permits from Environment Canada (Appendix I species only)

If you are bringing back CITES Appendix 2 Orchids and orchid hybrids, you will NOT need a CITES Import Permit from Environment Canada. This was confirmed with the CITES officer.

#### Appendix 1 orchids require a CITES Import Permit from EC

Apply to EC CITES office [CITES@ec.gc.ca](mailto:CITES@ec.gc.ca) for a permit which is free of charge. You must identify the exact species and you are supposed to supply the CITES certificate from the foreign vendor before EC will issue the certificate. You have to apply 6-8 weeks before you need the permit, e.g. now. If you go this route be sure to mark the application form "*attention Lynn*" and indicate right up front the absolutely critical deadline date you require (even then getting it may be dicey)

### 3. PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATION FOR YOUR PURCHASED PLANTS

At WOC choose your orchids (hybrids and CITES Appendix 2) carefully - it will be easier to buy from a Singapore dealer. If you decide to buy from a dealer from another country make sure they have phytos already issued with the proper declarations required by Canada before you buy. If you have to purchase a re-export certificate from Singapore officials this is another cost and time consumer to obtain.

All orchid plants must be bare root and accompanied by a Canadian import permit and phytosanitary certificate with the appropriate declarations as required by the Canadian import permit.

Flasks also require an import permit and phytosanitary certificate and must be clearly free of soil, sand and related debris, e.g. on sterile media. Additional declarations are not required for flasks.

The AVA (Singapore Plant Health Authority) will have officers at the Show to certify your plants. The time their offices are open and where will be posted at the Show. Don't leave certification until the last day.

The cost FOR PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATION will be S\$12.00 for up to 10 plants, and S\$50.00 for more than 10 plants. We do not know how they will handle sterile flasks.

There is also a fee for CITES certification, if required (Appendix 1 grown under artificial conditions and not wild collected). This is S\$ 12.00 per species and minimum fee is S\$60.

#### 4. IMPORT PROCEDURES AT THE Canadian BORDER

When you arrive at the border, you will need to show your bare rooted plants, your Canadian import permit and the Singapore phytosanitary certificates for each orchid. If you have CITES I orchids then you will also need to show the CITES import permit and documentation.

Note, as this is not an import from the USA, there is no houseplant exemption for hobbyists. Further, if you decide to ship your orchids back separately, you will need to go through a Canadian broker who will need a copy of all your paperwork.

Jean Hollebhone and Marilyn Light