

Import/Export Checklist

March 2008

Planning to purchase orchids abroad?

Step 1: Read the requirements for Phytosanitary certificates and for CITES documents. Pay particular attention to requirements for certain states or countries. If there are any questions, please ask for clarification.

Step 2a: Before planning to purchase orchids at a 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 inspectors will be at the show to issue papers and when they will be on the premises. 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 a 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 3: Don't leave things to the last minute. Allow plenty of time to obtain your import permit (if required) and for documents to be prepared at a show. You may have to leave your purchases with the inspectors for a day or more before obtaining the documents. 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

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.

Step 8: Carry all original documents with you.

Step 9: Be aware of the mechanism to pre-clear material if making an airport connection. Details may be found on the COC website titled 'Travellers importing orchids'.

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