

[Detailed guide: Importing plants, fruit, vegetables or plant material to the UK](#)

Updated: Address to submit documents after your consignment has arrived has been updated.

Categories of material

Plants, fruit, vegetables and plant material (like soil) from outside the EU fall into 3 categories:

- ‘unrestricted’ material you can bring to the UK without any conditions
- ‘controlled’ material that you can only bring into the UK with a ‘phytosanitary certificate’ to show it meets the requirements for entry to the EU
- ‘prohibited’ material you can’t bring into the UK unless you [get a scientific research licence](#) or an exception (‘derogation’) to the rules – [contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) (APHA) if you want to apply for a derogation

The rest of this guide explains how to import controlled material that requires a phytosanitary certificate.

Find out how to [send or receive plants within the EU](#) and how to export plants to non-EU countries.

Material that’s controlled

Controlled plants, fruit, vegetables and plant material include:

- all plants for planting
- common fruits (except for bananas and grapes) other than fruit preserved by deep freezing
- cut flowers
- some seeds and leafy vegetables other than vegetables preserved by deep freezing
- potatoes from some countries

If you’re not sure whether the item you want to bring to the UK is controlled, check the [list of plant species by import category](#) or [contact APHA](#).

Personal allowance

You can import a total of 5 controlled plants without a phytosanitary

certificate, if you're returning from an EU country or Switzerland, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey and the plants are:

- in your personal baggage
- for your personal use
- not diseased or infected with pests

Otherwise you must follow the procedures in this guide.

Register as an importer

You must follow the Procedure for Electronic Application for Certificates from the Horticultural marketing inspectorate (PEACH).

[Register for PEACH](#) before you start importing plants.

Once you're registered you can follow the progress of your consignments through inspections and other checks on the [PEACH website](#).

Phytosanitary certificates

You must get a phytosanitary certificate for each consignment of controlled plants, fruit, vegetables or plant material that you import, from the plant health authority in the country where your supplier is.

The certificate is a statement from the plant health authority that the consignment:

- has been officially inspected
- complies with legal requirements for entry into the EU
- is free from serious pests and diseases

The inspection referred to in the certificate must take place no more than 14 days before the consignment is dispatched from the inspecting country. The certificate must be signed by someone in the inspecting plant health authority within the same 14 day period.

If your consignment includes plants from more than one country, you'll need to get a separate phytosanitary certificate from the plant health authority in each country.

Quantity

Phytosanitary certificates include a 'quantity declared' section. Tell the plant health authority that's completing the form to fill in quantities as follows.

For cut flowers quantity must be stated as the number of stems.

Quantities must be stated in kilograms (kg) for fruit, vegetables, soil and branches with foliage, potatoes, grain and the following plants for planting:

- bulbs
- corms and rhizomes
- plants in tissue culture
- seeds

For any other plants for planting, the quantity must be recorded as the number of items in the consignment.

It's up to you to make sure quantities are stated in this way. The plant health authority may use quantity measures for consignments bound for other countries, so you will need to tell them about the measures required for UK-bound consignments.

Pre-arrival notification

You must use the [PEACH website](#) to give advance notice each time you bring a consignment to the UK.

You must give:

- in the case of any relevant material brought by air, at least 4 working hours before the relevant material is landed
- in any other case, at least 3 working days before the relevant material is landed

You must also scan the following documents and upload them to the PEACH website before your consignment arrives:

- the phytosanitary certificate for the consignment
- the travel ticket if you're travelling with the plants yourself
- bill of lading, cargo movement request or delivery company invoice if you're not travelling with the plants
- the [form you must complete to record details of your imported plant material](#) – this applies to plant material for planting

Inspections

When it arrives in the UK, your consignment must be presented for inspection to check it:

- includes all required documents
- contains the plants you have said it does
- is free from pests and diseases

If your consignment doesn't pass an inspection it may be destroyed, treated, or sent back to where you sent it from at your expense.

Inspection fees

For each consignment imported you have to pay the following fees:

- A fee of £9.71 for each consignment to cover the cost of checking the

consignment's paperwork and identity.

- A physical inspection fee – the amount you will have to pay will depend on the type of plant material you're importing.

See Schedule 1 of the [Plant Health etc. \(Fees\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#).

Reduced inspection fees

Some plant material, imported from particular countries, is eligible for a reduced level of physical inspection. This may mean a lower inspection fee.

Check schedule 2 of the [Plant Health etc. \(Fees\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#) to find out if your consignment qualifies for a lower inspection fee.

Points of entry

You can use these [designated points of entry](#) to bring your consignment into the UK.

You'll be able to select the point of entry you want to use from a drop down list on the PEACH website.

Heathrow

Consignments can be inspected at Heathrow from 6am until midnight everyday.

APHA will inspect your consignment within 4 hours of it arriving as long as:

- you've given the required 4 working hours notice
- it arrives and is presented for inspection at the time you indicated on your PEACH application

Manchester, Gatwick or Stansted

Consignments can be inspected at Manchester, Gatwick or Stansted airports between 8:30am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except [UK bank holidays](#)).

APHA will inspect your consignment within 4 hours of it becoming available for inspection (ie after you bring it to the office), as long as:

- you've given the required 4 working hours notice
- it arrives and is presented for inspection at the time you indicated on your PEACH application

Other airports

Consignments can be inspected at other airports between 8:30am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except [UK bank holidays](#)).

APHA will inspect your consignment within one working day of it becoming available for inspection (ie after you bring it to the office), as long as:

- you've given the required 4 working hours notice

- it arrives and is presented for inspection at the time you indicated on your PEACH application

Seaports and approved inland inspection points

Consignments can be inspected at seaports and approved inland inspection points between 8:30am and 5pm from Monday to Friday (except [UK bank holidays](#)).

APHA will inspect your consignment within 1 working day of it becoming available (ie once the port has moved it to the approved inspection facility), as long as you've given the required 3 working days notice.

Alternative inspection posts

Inspections can also be carried out at:

- an External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF) – read the [list of ETSFs approved for plant imports](#)
- premises designated under the Customs Freight Simplified Procedure (CFSP)

Apply to:

- [have your premises authorised as an ETSF](#)
- [have your existing ETSF authorisation upgraded](#) to allow plant health inspection to be carried out there
- [have your premises designated under CFSP](#)

How to present certificates

If you're travelling with your consignment, you can provide phytosanitary and reforwarding certificates for inspection yourself when you arrive in the UK.

If you're shipping the consignment by post, put the certificates in an envelope marked 'For the attention of Border Force' and attach it to the outside of your package.

If you have more than one package, attach certified copies of the certificates to each package. A certified copy is a copy signed by the plant health authority that drew up the certificate.

Submit documents after your consignment arrives

Within 3 days of your consignment reaching the UK, you must post the original phytosanitary certificate to APHA.

For consignments landing at Heathrow or Gatwick send the certificate to:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

1st floor

Building 4

Heathrow Boulevard

284 Bath Road

West Drayton

Middlesex

UB7 0DQ

For consignments landing anywhere else send the certificate to:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

Room 11GA02

Sand Hutton

York

YO41 1LZ

Consignments travelling through another EU state

If your consignment travelled through another EU member state, the plant health authority in the other member state will have taken the phytosanitary certificate and replaced it with a 'plant health movement document'.

In this case, send the plant health movement document to APHA instead.

Complaints and appeals

You can [complain or appeal](#) if you're unsatisfied with the service you receive from APHA.