

Unsolicited Seeds From Foreign Sources

 plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu/unsolicited-seeds-from-foreign-sources

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Several states are now reporting and you may have read or heard news reports of packets of seeds arriving in the mail from foreign shipping addresses that were not ordered. If you receive such a packet, **DO NOT** open or discard them. Rather, follow these directions from the NJ Dept of Agriculture:

UPDATED NJDA

ALERT (<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/hottopics/topics200727.html>)

We have been receiving reports of people receiving seeds in the mail from China that they did not order. Sometimes the seeds are sent in packages stating that the contents are jewelry. Unsolicited seeds could be invasive, introduce diseases to local plants, or be harmful to livestock.

Here's what to do if you receive unsolicited seeds from another country:

This is known as agricultural smuggling. Report it to the USDA!

1. **DO NOT plant them and if they are in sealed packaging don't open the sealed package.**
2. Take a photo of the package and seeds and send the photos to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture Joseph.zoltowski@ag.nj.gov and USDA SITC at SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov
3. **Maintain the seeds and packaging and send to the USDA Office located at 1500 Lower Rd, Linden NJ 07036 for evidence.**

If individuals are aware of the potential smuggling of prohibited exotic fruits, vegetables, or meat products into or through the USA, they can help APHIS by contacting the confidential Anti-smuggling Hotline number at **800-877-3835** or by sending an Email to SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov. USDA will make every attempt to protect the confidentiality of any information sources during an investigation within the extent of the law.

WE **R** HERE WHEN YOU NEED **US**



Mysterious and Unsolicited Seed Shipments from China

Informational Bulletin

New Jersey Regional Operations & Intelligence Center (NJ ROIC) Threat Analysis Unit ~ ROIC202007-13750T
ROIC SIN: NJ-HLT-0400 (Groups/Individuals)/DHS SIN: HSEC 6
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Key Findings:

The New Jersey Regional Operations & Intelligence Center (NJ ROIC) has been made aware that people both in New Jersey and across the country have received suspicious, unsolicited packages of plant seeds originating from China. There are several different types of seeds being received nationwide (reference below pictures). Some of these seeds arrive in packages displaying Chinese lettering and are marked “China Post.” Open source reporting indicates the seeds have also been sent in packaging claiming the contents are jewelry.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) urge recipients to not plant the seeds. The species of the seeds has not yet been identified and could be invasive, harmful to livestock, and/or introduce diseases to local plants. Propagative materials including seeds are regulated because just one destructive pest might be enough to start a pest outbreak that can cause millions of dollars in damage to crops, trees, flowers, or lawns.

Please Note: The shipments may be the result of a scamming technique known as “brushing.” Shippers operating in foreign countries, mostly notably China, create fake user accounts utilizing legitimate contact information. Once shipments have verified delivery, the sellers will exploit the fake accounts to provide positive reviews for their own merchandise. The brushing scam is not exclusive to seeds and may contain other unordered merchandise, such as hair ties and key chains. For more information, please refer to the following websites: [NJDA](#) and [USDA](#).

Should you receive any unsolicited seeds, please refer to the following guidance from the NJDA and the USDA:

- Do not plant them and if they are in sealed packaging don’t open the package.
- Take a photo of the package and seeds and send the photos to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture to joseph.zoltowski@ag.nj.gov and USDA SITC at SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov.
- The USDA categorizes this as agricultural smuggling. If encountered, it is recommended that you maintain the seeds and packaging. The USDA requests the seeds are sent to the USDA Office located at 1500 Lower Rd, Linden NJ 07036 for evidence.
- Additionally, if individuals are aware of the potential smuggling of prohibited exotic fruits, vegetables, or meat products into or through the USA, they can help the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) by contacting the confidential Anti-smuggling Hotline number at 1-800-877-3835.



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