

TURNING OVER A CLEAN LEAF

How to protect your nursery or garden centre from pest and disease invaders

1 Plants coming in: is the main method by which many pests and diseases move between premises!

What can you do?

- Source plants from suppliers with a good record of supplying disease-free stock
- Check whether your supplier belongs to an official accreditation scheme
- Nurseries - if possible, propagate from your own stock plants

2 Plants on arrival need careful inspection.

Remember to:

- Check for compliance with purchase order and any plant passport or phytosanitary certificate required
- Keep accurate records of all bought-in material
- Only accept delivery if you are sure that the plants are healthy
- If there are any problems, inform your supplier immediately

3 Quarantine areas should be isolated from production and retail areas.

What more can you do?

- Restrict access to the area
- Be scrupulous about hygiene
- Use dedicated tools
- Hold new arrivals for an appropriate period and monitor frequently

4 Clear Information helps keep customers and visitors informed and aware. **How can this be done?**

- Display a notice to site visitors about the risks of introducing pests or diseases
- Clearly identify quarantine areas to prevent visitors entering
- Increase consumer confidence by informing them of the methods used to minimise pest and disease risk
- Consider providing information on pests and diseases, e.g. at help desks.

5 Day-to-day hygiene: it's all too easy to spread pests and diseases through poor hygiene!

It's important to:

- Regularly clean and disinfect tools, machinery, clothes and boots
- Protect hands from contamination
- Use new pots and trays wherever possible
- Cover items (e.g. pots, compost storage areas) that could be contaminated by plant or soil debris
- Have regular 'clean-ups' of standing areas
- Bag up pest or disease-affected plants before removal
- Cover skips & other disposal areas and locate them downwind from production/retail areas
- Practice scrupulous hygiene in propagation areas



Concept by David Slawson and Designed by Touchwood Design

6 Good plant husbandry also matters.

What can you do?

- Avoid plant stress caused by nutrient deficiency or under/over watering
- Handle plants with care at all times
- Avoid prolonged leaf wetness or very high humidity:
 - Use sub-irrigation if possible
 - Don't overhead irrigate late in the day
 - Ventilate greenhouses & polytunnels
 - Space plants well
- Protect aerial parts from soil or compost splash

7 Good water management should help to prevent the spread of plant pathogens, such as *Phytophthora* species.

How can this be done?

- Recycled water should be treated before use
- Regularly test recycled water for pathogens
- Cover water storage tanks
- Regularly clean and disinfect storage tanks & irrigation lines
- Keep paths & standing areas in good order to prevent puddles forming
- Improve drainage of soil-grown crops where waterlogging is a problem

8 Organic waste can harbour pests and pathogens.

What should be done with it?

- All dead plants, prunings, etc., must be collected and disposed of safely
- Options for disposal include:
 - Composting according to FERA's Code of Practice for Horticultural Waste
 - Anaerobic digestion
 - Landfill
 - Burning
- Ensure that you are fully aware of the regulations surrounding waste disposal and treatment

9 Regular monitoring helps you spot problems early and take prompt remedial action. **What can you do?**

- Use trained staff to monitor stock at regular intervals for pests and diseases
- Get any unknown problems identified
- Include the site boundaries (e.g. hedgerows) in the monitoring schedule
- Notify suspect findings of quarantine pests or diseases to the relevant plant health authority.