Health and Food Safety

**WHY PLANTS ARE SO IMPORTANT**

Plants provide us with...

- Food for humans
- clothes
- feed for animals
- fuel

They are important for our...

- environment, landscapes, and biodiversity.
- Increased global plant trade, human travel and climate change all give plant pests and diseases more opportunities to spread.

**WHAT THE EU IS DOING TO PROTECT PLANT HEALTH**

**Prevention**

Avoiding new plant pests is at the centre of our fight against plant pests and diseases. This is done by:

- import controls
- worldwide screening and surveillance
- early detection and notification

**Import rules**

All plants (entire plants, fruits, vegetables, etc.) imported into the EU need to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate (exemptions: bananas, coconuts, dates, pineapples and durians). Some specific plants or plant products may not be imported at all due to:

- permanent (e.g. citrus plants for planting, seed potatoes)
- provisional (e.g. oak and apple plants for planting) bans.

Within the EU, all plants moving between businesses require a plant passport.

**Dealing with plant pest or disease outbreaks**

Outbreaks of plant pests can devastate the environment and the economy as the plant bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* did to olive tree plantations in Southern Europe with potential production losses of 5.5 billion Euros.

Steps taken by EU before and during an outbreak:

- EU co-financing for survey programmes to check for new pests
- notification of outbreaks by professional operators
- demarcation of areas for pests/disease eradication

**Global cooperation**

Protecting plant health is a global challenge. The EU is cooperating with countries around the world:

As part of the International Plant Protection Convention of the United Nations, developing global standards to protect plants;

Raising awareness of plant health during the UN International Year for Plant Health 2020.