

COC The Canadian Orchid Congress

Importing Orchids into Canada - for Hobbyists

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Importing orchids should not be overly challenging or worrisome but fear of the consequences of a slipup cause many potential importers anxiety and apprehension. What if I do not have the correct documentation? Will the parcel be seized? Will the plants languish on a shelf somewhere while waiting for expert identification? Will the plants die and the investment be lost? The importation process need not be source of anxiety. Certainly, there are regulations to respect, forms to complete and fees to pay, but if all is done in the proper sequence and within the regulations, then we have little to worry about except taking good care of the imported plants once they are in our care.

If any non-commercial hobbyist follows the most recent directives of both the CFIA and CITES and still encounters difficulties with a particular orchid importation, they should let us know about it, supplying details of the country of export, date and means of import, port of entry, what genera, species or hybrids were being imported, whether the plants were artificially propagated, wild-collected, in flask, etc., and what particular problem(s) was/were encountered and with which agency (Customs/Douanes, CFIA or CWS). We need to learn more about the root cause(s) of problems to develop effective solutions.

Orchid importations are controlled by **two** agencies, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (plant health) and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CITES). Depending upon what you intend to import, you may require permits from one or both agencies. Your importation will require certification by the exporting country that the plant material is healthy (Phytosanitary Certificate) and may also require documentation that the plant material can legally leave the exporting country (CITES Export documents). **What is needed when and for what is summarized in the Table below.**

Orchid importations are regulated under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) <http://www.cites.ca/> and by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (plant health) <http://www.inspection.gc.ca> Regulations are updated from time to time so it is best to verify the requirements and fees before ordering plants.

Fees for permits and certificates issued abroad vary from country to country and from state to state in the USA. Not all nurseries ship internationally so again, it is best to check first before starting the process at the Canadian end.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency - CFIA (plant health)

The CFIA issues Import Permits and requires Phytosanitary Certificates to accompany importations. See the Table below for details.

The requirements for importation can be obtained at the following web page:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/directe.shtml> Please re-check before planning any importation. Regulations can and

do change on a monthly basis. Directive D94-14 regarding permit requirements for importation from the continental US is currently being revised. Please contact the Permit Office if you have specific questions.

All importations of wild or artificially propagated species and hybrid plants and flasks from anywhere require a Phytosanitary Certificate.

Importations from the continental USA

A CFIA Import Permit is not usually required but there can be exceptions. A Phytosanitary Certificate is needed for all orchids including plants in flask.

A Permit to Import is now required for the states of California and Oregon (Curry county only). See CFIA Policy Directive D01-01 revised September 5, 2002

Regulated Commodities Soil or growing media alone or in association with plant material (including soil or media associated with terrestrial orchids).

Flasks may require a Permit to Import. Please inquire.

Commodities Exempt Epiphytic orchids with the bark of non_host species (see D01-01-Appendix 1). The requirements for the import of orchids are specified in policy D_96_09.

Please always verify current requirements before making plans to import plant material. You can request e-mail notification of new directives as they are issued. <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/directe.shtml>

Importations from outside the continental USA including Hawaii

CFIA Import Permit and Phytosanitary Certificates are required for all orchids including plants in flask.

One can download a Permit Form at the following url or request that one be sent by mail. <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/for/pdf/c5256e.pdf>

Print the form, enter all necessary information in capital letters or using a typewriter. Fax or mail the form with payment well in advance of your intended importation.

The Fee for CFIA Permits to Import plants and plant material - \$35 (as of August 2002)

Apply for permits well in advance!

Send the completed application:

By Fax: 613-228-6605

By Mail: Plant Health and Production Division Permit Office 59 Camelot Drive, Nepean, ON K1A 0Y9

Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

<http://www.cites.ca/>

CITES Appendix I

CITES Permits to import orchids into Canada only apply to **artificially propagated Appendix I species their seeds, pollen and pollinia, and cut flowers of artificially propagated plants**. Permits for hobbyists to import plants are free but you must complete an application form.

Appendix I includes **all species of *Paphiopedilum* and *Phragmipedium*** as well as ***Cattleya trianaei*, *Dendrobium cruentum*, *Laelia jongheana*, *Laelia lobata*, *Peristeria elata*, *Renanthera imschootiana* and *Vanda coerulea***.

Importation of wild-collected Appendix I plants from anywhere is prohibited.

To enter Canada from any country, artificially propagated Appendix I species need a **CITES Import Permit** issued by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) as well as a **CITES Export Permit** issued by the CITES Management Authority of the exporting country. No parts of Appendix I species are exempted from a requirement for permits including seeds, pollen and pollinia, and cut flowers of artificially propagated plants.

CITES Appendix II

Artificially propagated Appendix II species (which includes all orchid species other than those listed in Appendix I) **do not require a CITES Import Permit** issued by the CWS but they **do require a CITES Export Permit** issued by the CITES Management Authority of the exporting country. Parts of Appendix II species are exempted from a requirement for CITES permits including seeds, pollen and pollinia, and cut flowers of artificially propagated plants. Also exempted are fruits, parts and derivatives thereof of artificially propagated *Vanilla*.

All orchid seedlings (App. I and II), if in sterile flasks of solid or liquid medium, are exempted from a CITES Import Permit.

All orchid **seedlings (App. I and II) in sterile flasks** of solid or liquid medium imported **from outside the continental USA require both an Import Permit issued by the CFIA and a Phytosanitary Certificate but do not require a CITES Import Permit.**

Refer to the following table for permit requirements.

ORIGIN	CITES Appendix I or II*	TRADE	CFIA IMPORT PERMIT	PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATE	CITES IMPORT PERMIT from CWS	Permit from exporting country
Wild collected any country	I	Prohibited	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wild collected continental USA	II	Import	NO***	YES	NO	YES
Wild collected other countries	II	Import	YES	YES	NO	YES
Artificially propagated continental USA	I	Import	NO***	YES	YES	YES
Seedlings in flask continental USA	I	Import	NO***	YES	NO	NO
Artificially propagated continental USA	II	Import	NO***	YES	NO	YES** see exemptions
Seedlings in flask continental USA	II	Import	NO***	YES	NO	NO
Artificially propagated other countries	I	Import	YES	YES	YES	YES
Seedlings in flask other countries	I	Import	YES	YES	NO	NO
Artificially propagated other countries	II	Import	YES	YES	NO	YES
Seedlings in flask other countries	II	Import	YES	YES	NO	NO

***Appendix I** includes all species of *Paphiopedilum* and *Phragmipedium* as well as *Cattleya trianaei*, *Dendrobium cruentum*, *Laelia jongheana*, *Laelia lobata*, *Peristeria elata*, *Renanthera imschootiana* and *Vanda coerulea*. Appendix II includes all other species. No plants native to Canada and the continental USA are listed in Appendix I.

**Parts of Appendix II orchid species are exempted from a requirement for CITES permits including seeds, pollen and pollinia, and cut flowers of artificially propagated plants, and fruits, parts and derivatives thereof of artificially propagated *Vanilla*.

*** A Permit to Import is now required for the states of California and Oregon (Curry county only). Always verify current requirements before making plans to import plant material. <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/protect/dir/directe.shtml>

My recent experience.

When I decided to visit Malaysia and the 17th World Orchid Conference, I wanted to obtain appropriate permits to have in hand in case I found anything of interest. I did not know what I was going to find. How could I list species that I intended to import months beforehand? I was aware that there would be Malaysian officials on hand to assist foreigners with the documentation of their purchases. This is often the case with large international shows.

FIRST - I made a decision not to import Appendix I species which meant that I did not need to apply for a CITES Import Permit.

SECOND - I applied to the CFIA for an Import Permit for myself, travelling in Malaysia. This means that I did not have to have a particular nursery source in mind but would pick and choose as I travelled. I listed plants intended for import as Orchidaceae spp. and orchid hybrids of the genera I expected to purchase. I also indicated that I intended to import seedlings in sterile flasks as well as bareroot plants, just in case I was tempted by something unexpected at the show. I took the Import Permit with me so that the Malaysian authorities could know any specific declarations needed by Canada.

THIRD - I made my WOC purchases at the earliest opportunity. I bought six flasks which was what I could safely carry home. It also was as much as I wanted to grow on later. I received some orchid hybrid plants as a gift. I took my purchases to the inspection kiosk before the last day. I showed them my import permit which they needed to prepare the Phytosanitary Certificate and Export permit. They inspected the plants, I paid my fees, and received the papers. These I kept together with my purchases which were in my checked baggage. Then all I had to worry about was whether the luggage got lost which, thankfully, it did not. I declared the plants on return to Ottawa, showed my papers, had the material examined, then passed on through. The seedlings are now happily adapting to our summer existence.

CONCLUSIONS

Planning is the key to successful importations. Decide what you wish to acquire then find out what permits, etc. are needed to make the importation happen. Acquire your permits well before you order plants or plan to travel. Be aware that not all foreign dealers export orchids neither do all countries permit export of orchids. Note that only CITES Export Permits issued by the CITES Management Authority of the exporting country are valid. Verify that permits are duly dated, stamped and signed.

Only the larger international shows arrange for inspection during the show. Always ask about this before formulating your plans as it is an invaluable service. If this service is not available at a show, lengthy and costly measures sometimes are needed to get your plants legally permitted and certified.

Never give in to the temptation to smuggle orchids.