



**Australian Government**

**Department of Sustainability, Environment,  
Water, Population and Communities**

# HOW TO EXPORT OR IMPORT ORCHID SPECIMENS

This fact sheet provides information on how to legally export or import orchid specimens from and to Australia. It should be read in conjunction with the general information sheets entitled *Permits to export or import wildlife or wildlife products* and *The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*.

## Introduction

The Australian Government is committed to protecting and conserving Australian native wildlife by regulating international trade. This helps to protect targeted species against overexploitation, and Australian ecosystems against the introduction of invasive species.

The Australian Government also works with other nations to protect wildlife globally, by implementing CITES (see CITES fact sheet mentioned above).

In Australia, the export and import of wildlife and wildlife products is regulated under Part 13A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), which is administered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

Regulation applies equally to individuals, commercial organisations and not-for-profit organisations.

## About orchids

Orchids, known for their stunning flowers, are the largest family of flowering plants (Orchidaceae) in the world, with over 30 000 species identified. They are distributed in most countries and are especially prolific in tropical regions, where the majority of species grow on the trunks and branches of trees.

## Orchids and CITES

All species of orchid are listed CITES Appendix I and II. Apart from the exemptions listed below, orchid specimens, including all parts and derivatives, cannot legally be exported from, or imported into, Australia, unless they are accompanied by valid CITES import and export permits or a pre-CITES certificate.

**The full list of CITES species can be viewed at:** [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf)



## CITES exemptions for orchids:

Some exemptions allow certain orchid specimens to be imported or exported without CITES permits.

For species listed in Appendix I, no permits are required for:

- seedling or tissue cultures obtained in vitro, in solid or liquid media, transported in sterile containers.
- For species listed in Appendix II, and artificially propagated hybrids of Appendix I species, no permits are required for:
- seeds, spores and pollen (including pollinia)
- seedling or tissue cultures obtained in vitro, in solid or liquid media, transported in sterile containers
- cut flowers of artificially propagated plants, or
- the fruits of artificially propagated plants of the genus *Vanilla* and parts and derivatives of those fruits.

Additionally, no permits are required for artificially propagated specimens of *Cymbidium*, *Dendrobium*, *Phalaenopsis* and *Vanda*, provided specific shipment and labelling conditions have been met. Details of the specific requirements are outlined in the *Australian Guide to the list of CITES species*, which can be viewed at: [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf)

Plants not clearly qualifying for an exemption must be accompanied by appropriate CITES documents.

## General exports and imports

In addition to the Australian CITES permits, it will usually be necessary to obtain a CITES import or export permit from the CITES management authority of the country of export.

### Personal imports and exports

A permit can generally be issued for the import or export of orchid specimens for personal purposes (the specimen

must not be intended for trade or sale), provided the specimens are not listed on Appendix I and have been legally sourced.

### Commercial exports

A permit can generally be issued for the export of orchid specimens for commercial purposes if they are derived from an approved source (see below).

### Commercial imports

A permit can generally be issued for the import of orchid specimens for commercial purposes if an overseas CITES export permit has been obtained. In the case of Appendix I specimens the CITES export permit must certify that the specimens have been artificially propagated.

### Re-exports

A re-export permit may be issued for the export of orchid specimens that have been legally imported into Australia, subject to any conditions legally imposed at the time of import.

## Approved sources for export

The following approved sources apply to exports of orchid specimens for commercial purposes:

- Appendix I species—artificial propagation program approved by the department
- Appendix II species—artificial propagation program, wildlife trade operation, or wildlife trade management plans approved by the department.

See below for the link to view details of sources approved by the department.

## What else do I need to know?

Exports and imports of wildlife and wildlife products may also be subject to regulation under the *Customs Act 1901* (administered by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service) and the *Quarantine Act 1908* (administered by the Australian Quarantine



and Inspection Service). These organisations may be contacted through offices in each state capital, or through their head offices:

### **Australian Customs and Border Protection Service**

Customs House  
5 Constitution Avenue  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Telephone: 02 6275 6666  
Freecall: 1300 363 263  
Website: [www.customs.gov.au](http://www.customs.gov.au)

### **Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS)**

GPO Box 858  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Telephone: 02 6272 3933  
Freecall: 1800 020 504  
Website: [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au)

## **Where can I get more information?**

For more information on permits, please read the general information sheet entitled *Permits to export or import wildlife and wildlife products*, or contact the department at the address below:

### **Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Wildlife Trade Regulation Section**

GPO BOX 787  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: 02 6274 1900  
Facsimile: 02 6274 1921  
Email: [wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au](mailto:wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au)  
Website: [www.environment.gov.au/travel](http://www.environment.gov.au/travel)

The following links may also be of use or interest:

**List of CITES species** [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/cites/pubs/cites.pdf)

**Permit application forms** [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/permits/forms/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/permits/forms/index.html)

**CITES Authorities in other countries**  
[www.cites.org/common/directy/e\\_directy.html](http://www.cites.org/common/directy/e_directy.html)

**Approved sources of wildlife for commercial export** [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/sources/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/sources/index.html)

**Appendix I Artificial propagation operations (or captive breeding operations) registered with the CITES Secretariat:**

[www.cites.org/common/reg/e\\_cb.html](http://www.cites.org/common/reg/e_cb.html)

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BIO 18\_0809



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