

Updated RHS policies and guidelines regarding plastic use and use of floral foam in displays

Plastic, Bags & Pots

- Plastic bags are now prohibited site wide
- Paper, compostable or sustainable fabric bags are an acceptable alternative
- Visitors are being encouraged to bring their own bags for life and there will be re-usable bags available to buy on site

RHS Shows & Floral Foam – 2023 Show Season

As part of our efforts to improve sustainability and to make environmentally-minded choices when planning our events, with the decision to ban all plastic containing floral foam at all shows and events in 2023.

Many current floral foams on the market are non-biodegradable, and use micro-plastics and due to the nature of its use it is very easy for these to get into water supplies. We have taken the decision in consultation with exhibitors, competitors, venues and site managers.

What are the alternatives?

There are several great floristry resources online proposing alternatives. Some to consider include:

- Chicken wire or metal pins (Kenzan)
- Moss
- Green foliage
- Tubes and water
- Newspaper
- Pebbles, sand, gravel, clay
- Marbles

If you are using a degradable alternative to floral foam, please contact melinda.goodhew@threecounties.co.uk to confirm the product is suitable. We also have a recorded foam free video with Pip Bensley covering alternative mechanics to which I can share with you by request.

Environmental responsibility

Conservation and the environment

The following regulations have been formulated in accordance with The Royal Horticultural Society's policies on conservation and the environment.

Restricted materials

- Surface-stripped limestone pavement must not be used at any RHS Shows
- The RHS Sustainability Policy has committed the RHS to be completely peat-free by 2025, including in RHS Gardens and Shows, by which time all plants sold in its retail outlets and on display at its shows will be completely peat-free.
- Peat must not be used for staging or mulching purposes
- Exhibitors are encouraged to minimise or exclude peat from plant production as much as possible

- Timber treated with creosote should not be used at Shows. The European Commission restricts the use of creosote-treated products, for more information see: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/biocides/regulations.htm>

Restricted plants and plant regulations

The Society reserves the right to demand the removal of any plants or other materials which compromise the following RHS policies.

- Exhibitors are not permitted to sell plants, moss, bulbs or corms which have been collected from the wild
- Exhibitors should ensure they comply with CITES as implemented in the European Union and other conservation legislation designed to protect wild plants and their habitats. For more information see: [cites.org/eng/disc/what.php](https://www.rhs.org/eng/disc/what.php)
- The use of Quercus (Oak) is restricted to minimise the risk of spreading Oak Processionary Moth (OPM). For more information please see subsequent section 'RHS Plant Health Policies'
- The Society's policy regarding the use or sale at RHS Shows of non-native invasive plants, in accordance with Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act for England and Wales and the EU Implementing Regulation 2016/1141, is as follows:

1. Non-native invasive species banned from sale or use at RHS Shows

A small number of species are banned from use or sale at all RHS Shows, with no exceptions. These are indicated in the 'Banned plants' table.

2. Species banned except where their use can be demonstrated to be an integral part of the exhibit's message/theme.

These are indicated in the 'Allowed with permission from the RHS' table.

3. Non-native invasive species that may be used or sold at RHS Shows

The species listed in the 'Allowed with appropriate explanatory information' table should be avoided if possible but, if essential to the integrity of the exhibit, they may be used or sold as long as suitable advice/explanatory material or labelling is provided.

Banned plants	
Scientific name	Common name
<i>Acacia saligna</i>	Golden wreath wattle
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of heaven
<i>Andropogon virginicus</i>	Broomsedge
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	Alligator weed
<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Milkweed
<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>	Fern, Water
<i>Baccharis halmifolia</i>	Groundsel bush
<i>Cabomba caroliniana</i>	Carolina fanwort
<i>Cardiospermum grandiflorum</i>	Balloon vine
<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Stonecrop, Australian Swamp; New Zealand Pygmyweed
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	Water hyacinth
<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's waterweed
<i>Ehrharta calycina</i>	Purple veldgrass
<i>Ehrharta calycina</i>	Perennial veldgrass
<i>Gunnera tinctoria</i>	Rhubarb, Giant
<i>Gymnocoronis spilanthoides</i>	Senegal tea
<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	Giant hogweed
<i>Heracleum persicum</i>	Persian hogweed
<i>Heracleum sosnowskyi</i>	Sosnowsky's hogweed
<i>Humulus scandens</i>	Japanese hop
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	Pennywort, Floating
<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	Balsam, Himalayan
<i>Lagarosiphon major</i>	Curly waterweed
<i>Lespedeza cuneata</i>	Chinese shrub clover
<i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i>	Primrose, Water
<i>Ludwigia hexapetala</i>	Primrose, Water
<i>Ludwigia peploides</i>	Primrose, Floating Water
<i>Ludwigia uruguayensis</i>	Primrose, Water
<i>Lygodium japonicum</i>	Climbing fern
<i>Lysichiton americanus</i>	American skunk cabbage
<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Japanese stiltgrass
<i>Myriophyllum heterophyllum</i>	Broadleaf watermilfoil
<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	Parrot's Feather
<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>	Whitetop weed
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>	Crimson fountaingrass
<i>Persicaria perfoliata</i>	Asiatic tear-thumb
<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>	mesquite
<i>Pueraria montana var. lobata</i>	Kudzu vine

Allowed with permission from the RHS	
Scientific name	Common name
<i>Elodea</i> spp.	Waterweeds
<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	Knotweed, Japanese
<i>Fallopia japonica</i> × <i>Fallopia sachalinensis</i> [F. × <i>bohemica</i>]	Knotweed, Hybrid
<i>Fallopia sachalinensis</i>	Knotweed, Giant

Allowed with appropriate explanatory information	
Scientific name	Common name
<i>Allium paradoxum</i>	Leek, Few-flowered
<i>Allium triquetrum</i>	Garlic, Three-cornered
<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>	Fig, Hottentot
<i>Cotoneaster bullatus</i>	Cotoneaster, Hollyberry
<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	Cotoneaster
<i>Cotoneaster integrifolius</i>	Cotoneaster, Entire-leaved
<i>Cotoneaster microphyllus</i>	Cotoneaster, Small-leaved
<i>Cotoneaster simonsii</i>	Cotoneaster, Himalayan
<i>Crocosmia</i> × <i>crocosmiiflora</i>	Montbretia
<i>Diphysma crassifolium</i>	Dewplant, Purple
<i>Lamiaeum galeobdolon</i> subsp. <i>argentatum</i>	Archangel, Variegated Yellow
<i>Parthenocissus inserta</i>	Creeper, False Virginia
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Creeper, Virginia
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	Lettuce, Water
<i>Rhododendron luteum</i>	Azalea, Yellow
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Rhododendron
<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> × <i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Rhododendron
<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	Rose, Japanese
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	Potato, Duck
<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	Salvinia, Giant

Plant health at RHS shows

For any questions related to plant health at RHS Shows please email: showspanthealth@rhs.org.uk

Government plant health regulations

On January 1 2022 new import regulations for plants and plant products (for example wood and bark) came into force; all exhibitors will need to ensure that any plants acquired for show use comply with these regulations. These new regulations are currently being phased in, with the final phase planned to come into force on July 1 2022. All plants imported from the EU require pre-notification, and are subject to documentary and identity checks. Some plants, considered high-risk, must be inspected.

More details about plant imports can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/importing-and-exporting-plants-and-plant-products> <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/eu-exit-guidance/imports/>

Please note that an RHS show site must not be used by an exhibitor as a Place of Destination when importing plants. If you are importing direct to GB, rather than buying through a GB supplier, then your plants will need to be delivered to a registered PoD before being moved to a show site. The best way for this may be to employ an import agent.

UK Plant Passports

EU plant passports are no longer valid in Great Britain (GB) i.e. the UK excluding Northern Ireland (NI). Any plants imported from the EU will need to have a UK plant passport if being moved within GB. Plants imported from Northern Ireland (NI) continue to comply with EU phytosanitary rules as agreed in the NI Protocol, EU plant passports remain valid until replaced with a UK plant passport. The replacement UK passport must include a country code of 'GB(NI)' to ensure full traceability.

UK Plant Passport rules affecting shows

All show exhibitors are, according to UK law, recognised as professional operators, this includes both businesses that sell plants and businesses that do not sell plants. All exhibitors must therefore abide by UK plant passporting laws:

- Exhibitors must maintain records of UK plant passports for any plants purchased from a GB business selling plants for up to 3 years. There are no government guidelines on the format in which records are kept. We recommend for ease of inspection at a show (by either RHS Plant Health or Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)) that information is collated in one folder.
- A GB business selling plants to an exhibitor is required by law to issue UK plant passports for any plants purchased, this includes when selling to an exhibitor on a show site.
- Plants delivered direct from a GB business selling plants to an exhibitor's business address must be supplied with UK plant passports. The exhibitor does not need to issue another UK plant passport to move the same plant material from their business to the show site.
- Plants delivered direct from a GB business selling plants to an exhibitor on a show site, must be supplied with UK plant passports.
- Please note: Any business selling plants at a show to a customer for personal use only, i.e. not business use, does not need to issue a UK plant passport.

A summary of government plant health regulations including plant passporting requirements can be found in the 'Plant Health Regulation Update' document online

RHS plant health policies

Plants should be visibly free from pests and diseases and comply with current RHS plant health policy. Plant health checks will be carried out on site and you may be asked to remove unhealthy plants or plants that do not meet RHS plant health policies. In the most serious cases, if a pest or disease of concern is found on your plants you may be prohibited from selling at the show. The RHS is continually working hard to ensure excellent biosecurity at all of our shows, however, there is always a risk of pest and diseases from other plants being exhibited at the show or in the surrounding environment, and so exhibiting your plants is done at your own risk. See the RHS 'Plant Health Regulation Update' document for advice about good biosecurity practices including how to quarantine stock when returning to your nursery from an event. Please contact showspanthealth@rhs.org.uk with any queries.

There are three main policies you should be aware of when bringing plants to RHS Shows:

Xylella fastidiosa policy - Reviewed for 2022

The bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* is currently one of the biggest risks to the UK horticultural industry and the wider landscape. The UK government and industry are taking action to prevent the introduction of *Xylella*. The RHS has identified nine hosts that are considered to present the highest risk of introducing the bacterium into the UK, these have also been associated with outbreaks in continental Europe. From the 9th of May 2022 some of these high risk hosts will be temporarily excluded from RHS Shows until we are comfortable that the risks of them carrying *Xylella* is low. These plants are:

- *Coffea* spp. (coffee)
- *Nerium oleander* (oleander)
- *Olea europea* (olive)
- *Polygala myrtifolia* (polygala)
- *Spartium junceum* (Spanish broom)

This is because the trade of these plants in the UK, historically and currently, relies upon importation of finished plants as the main route to the UK market. There is very limited, or no, UK-only production of these plants from UK-origin propagation material being traded to assist with market demands.

Plants from 4 other high-risk plant groups may still be exhibited under certain conditions. These plants are:

- *Hebe* spp. (hebe)
- *Lavandula* spp. (lavender)
- *Prunus dulcis* (syn. *Prunus amygdalus*) (almond)
- *Salvia rosmarinus* (syn. *Rosmarinus officinalis*) (rosemary)

These plants may only be exhibited at RHS Shows if they have been:

- Grown in the UK for their entire life from UK origin propagation material (i.e. from seeds or cuttings from a UK origin mother plant)
- Or, if imported from outside the UK, have been growing in the UK for 12 months minimum

Exhibitors who bring these plants to a show should expect to be asked to provide UK plant passports for the plants showing their origin (Section D) as GB, proving that they have been in the UK for a minimum of 12 months.

Specimen trees and palms

Large specimen trees and palms imported directly from overseas pose a significant plant health risk to GB horticulture. These risks are exacerbated when trees are imported with a rootball composed of soil originating from outside of GB. Such trees have the potential to carry pests, diseases and other unwanted organisms and, due to their size, are particularly difficult to inspect effectively.

In contrast plants grown in the UK for their entire life are of much less concern from a plant health risk point of view, they are also already acclimatised to UK growing conditions and can offer better establishment.

A semi-mature tree is defined as a tree with an overall height in excess of 5m and/or stem girth measure of at least 20 cm. Semi-mature trees are likely to be more than 10 years old at the time of sale (see National Plant Specification). Multi-stemmed trees with two or more main stems arising from or near ground level may have a smaller girth but will exceed a height of 5m. In practical terms, motorised machinery (such as forklift or loader) will be required to move such trees.

Semi-mature trees and palms exhibited at RHS Shows must be:

- Grown in the UK for their entire life from UK origin propagation material (i.e. from seeds or cuttings from a UK origin mother plant)
- Or, if imported from outside the UK, have been growing and monitored in the UK for 3 months minimum.
- Declared before the start of show build. See the Tree Specimen form on the Online Zone for details.

We request however that, where possible, all imported trees are held and monitored in the UK for at least 12 months prior to use in an RHS Show. Please ensure that you speak to your tree supplier(s) as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

At the show you may be required to provide a UK plant passport and/or other paperwork to demonstrate provenance and how long the tree has been in GB (for example an invoice or delivery note).

The RHS will be collecting data in order to monitor the source of any trees used at our shows and would like to know the origin details of any specimen trees you will be using.

Oak (Quercus) policy

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) (*Thaumetopoea processionea*) is a pest of oak trees. It is native to southern Europe but has established in London and the surrounding areas. OPM caterpillars have hairs which can cause sore throats, skin and eye irritation and breathing issues in humans and animals. Both the Chelsea Hospital grounds and Hampton Court Palace sit within the 'core outbreak zone' for OPM and consequently the use of any species of *Quercus* are banned at both Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Flower Show. Any *Quercus* used at Tatton or Malvern (where OPM is not present) must, by law, be sourced from an area free from OPM (known as a Pest Free Area or PFA). To move *Quercus* in GB, including if bringing to Tatton or Malvern, the plants must be issued with a special UK plant passport known as a PFA plant passport to confirm that the origin of the plant is free from OPM. For more details please request the 'Plant Health Regulation Update' document from the RHS.

Harmful plants

Most plants do not present any hazard to humans and incidents in the United Kingdom are rare. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of exhibitors to ensure that risks are avoided, e.g. by positioning plants known to have

skin or eye irritant qualities away from the front of a stand; and that controls are in place in case of an incident.

Potentially harmful plants must be clearly identified. For further details refer to the Code of Recommended Retail Practice Relating to the Labelling of Potentially Harmful Plants published by the Horticultural Trades Association: hta.org.uk/resourceLibrary/code-of-practice-for-potentiallyharmful-plants.html For more information see: rhs.org.uk/Advice/Profile?PID=524

Recycling and reuse

The Three Counties Showground has arranged with its contractors that waste collected from the Show will be recycled as far as it is reasonably practical. In most instances, separation of materials will take place off site.

Planning your exhibit to reduce waste

When planning your exhibit 'design out' waste. Consider whether materials can be re-used or recycled to ensure that as little as possible goes to landfill. Take care not to over order materials for your exhibit. Where surplus materials are unavoidable, consider whether they are suitable for a reuse scheme or can be recycled elsewhere.