

Sanitation Practices for Plant Pests

The following practices are recommended by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency when working with plants and plant pests.

- treating all plants and soils as if they are infected/infested;
- minimizing entry of personnel into laboratory and plant growth areas;
- providing adequate separation and/or physical barriers between plants infected or infested with different plant pests;
- washing hands (after removing gloves) before leaving the containment zone, and at any time after handling materials known or suspected to be contaminated with plant pests, if this poses a risk of inadvertently spreading pests;
- using decontaminated soil, soil-less potting mix or inert growing media, and cleaning up spilled soil or growing medium;
- watering plants carefully, avoiding soil and water splash, and avoiding touching plants with the hose;
- avoiding the use of automated watering systems where their use presents a risk of disseminating pests;
- cleaning and decontaminating work surfaces as appropriate with a suitable disinfectant;
- disinfecting items such as clippers, pruners and knives during and after use as appropriate to avoid plant-to-plant transfer of pests;
- cleaning and decontaminating pots, stakes and saucers after use, or using disposables that are decontaminated and discarded after use;
- surface sterilizing plant material before planting or transferring to tissue culture;
- maintaining obligate parasites (e.g. viruses, nematodes) in tissue culture plantlets where possible;
- eliminating unwanted pests by heat or cold therapy, surface sterilization, meristem culture or other suitable means;
- inspecting for, and removing and destroying, host plants infected or infested with unwanted organisms;
- using good housekeeping practices to keep the area neat, clean and free of dead plant material and unwanted plants and pests; and
- using dedicated cleaning equipment (e.g. brooms, mops, garbage cans) within containment zones.