



PERMITS NEEDED FOR BRINGING PLANTS, POTTING MEDIA AND ORGANIC FERTILIZERS INTO SINGAPORE

Singaporeans have been bringing in plants from overseas, in particular West Malaysia to beautify and improve on the aesthetics of their environment. The plants brought in are usually in pots with potting medium i.e. the materials used for growing plants, such as soil, peat moss, sphagnum moss, cocopeat, coconut husk, soil mixtures etc.

2 Besides plants, bags of potting medium and organic fertilizers made from materials of animal/plant origin are also brought in. The import of plants, potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers are regulated by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA).

3 The import of plants and potting medium requires plant health certification (phytosanitary certificate) at source and pre-departure treatment. Plants are usually chemically treated and potting medium fumigated for freedom from pests and diseases. Prior to any importation of animal/plant based organic fertilizers, AVA needs to conduct an assessment on the product for mitigation of risks to pests and diseases. An import permit from the AVA is also required.

4 In 2008 311 individuals brought in 511 numbers of plants and 4.2 tonnes of potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers in contravention to AVA's import requirements. About two thirds of the plants were claimed by their owners after inspection and treatment by AVA, and payment of fee for the inspection and treatment, and the AVA import permit fee. As treatment for potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers is not feasible, they have to be surrendered for destruction by AVA. Plants not claimed after ten days from the date of interception will also be destroyed by the AVA.

5 From January to October 2009, 1853 individuals brought in about 1869 numbers of plants and six tonnes of potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers without certification at source. About 255 numbers of these plants were claimed back by their owners. The number of plants and quantity of potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers brought in for the past 10 months compared to that brought in last year increased by 266% and 42.85% respectively.

MEDIA RELEASE

6 AVA recognizes that travelers returning from overseas may wish to bring in small quantity of plants for personal use. Hence, exemption has been granted to allow travelers returning from West Malaysia to bring in three plants, **without potting medium**, where the import permit from AVA and the phytosanitary certificate from Malaysia are not required.

7 Potting medium and animal/plant based organic fertilizers without proper treatment, certification and assessment are potential pathways for the introduction of pests and diseases into the county. Hence, the public is advised not to bring such items into Singapore unless the import requirements stipulated by AVA are fulfilled. Any non-compliance to the regulations can be fined up to \$1,000.



Issued by Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority
On 02 December 2009

MEDIA RELEASE