

PLANT PASSPORT GUIDANCE FOR NI PLANT GROWERS AND ASSOCIATED BUSINESSES

Since December 2019, under Plant Health Regulation (EU) 2016/2031, all plants for planting that are traded commercially within the European Union must be accompanied by a plant passport. For all Northern Ireland Registered, Authorised Professional Operators (RAPOs), these arrangements will continue from 1st January 2021. This guidance uses Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2313 as its source reference. Information is provided on plant passport format, content and use, relevant to Northern Ireland RAPOs and other Professional Operators.

Format and Elements of a Plant Passport

The following two examples illustrate alternative layouts for a typical EU plant passport:

	Plant Passport
A. <i>Hebe pinguifolia</i> 'Pagei'	
B. GB-NI/9990	
C. 2020/Stn1	
D. GB (NI)	

	Plant Passport		
A. <i>Hebe pinguifolia</i> 'Pagei'	B. GB-NI/9990	C. 2020/Stn1	D. GB (NI)

The passport does not have to be bounded inside a border, be of any minimum size, be printed or in colour. However, it must be clearly legible, indelible, headed with the title 'Plant Passport' and featuring Sections A, B, C (which may be blank) & D.

The EU (European) flag should be present and not substituted with any other emblem.

Section A: this shows the taxonomic (botanical or Latin) name of the plant(s). The genus (first part) of the taxonomic name is often sufficient detail for plant health purposes.

Section B: this shows the unique PHIB business registration number for your enterprise.

Note - your business will only be authorised to issue plant passports following a satisfactory PH2 registration inspection. This authorisation inspection must be reviewed annually.

Section C: this shows the traceability code for the plant(s) for which the passport(s) is/are issued.

Note - it is not mandatory to complete this section, except for certain high risk material e.g. potato, high risk *Xylella* host plants (from December 2021). Inclusion of a code allows a business to precisely identify batches of affected plants, should a plant health issue arise.

Section D: This is the ISO (internationally recognised) two-letter code for 'Country of Origin'.

The designated period after which imported plants can be 're-coded' to show a Northern Ireland 'Country of Origin' is currently 4 weeks for bedding (non-woody) plants and one growing season (minimum of 6 months) for woody species e.g. trees, shrubs and most climbing plants.

Note - GB is the ISO code for all of the UK, including NI, hence the 'NI' is not essential for plants raised in Northern Ireland businesses.

Protected Zone Plant Passports

Northern Ireland currently has a 'Protected Zone' status listing for twenty-three regulated (quarantine) pests and diseases. NI businesses also supply plants to territories with PZ status against other plant health risks e.g. fireblight (*Erwinia amylovora*). In order to protect this pest freedom and trade, RAPO businesses supplying relevant host plants must issue 'protected zone' (PZ) plant passports, as necessary. Two examples follow:

	Plant Passport - PZ			
	XANTPR			
A. <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Novita'	B. GB-NI/9990	C. 2020/Stn1	D. GB (NI)	

The above protected zone passport is a statement of freedom from 'bacterial shot-hole' disease (*Xanthomonas arboricola* pv. *pruni*) on evergreen laurel plants (*P. laurocerasus*).

	Plant Passport - PZ			
	BEMITA			
A. <i>Begonia semperflorens</i>	B. GB-NI/9990	C. 2020/Stn1	D. GB (NI)	

The above protected zone passport is a statement of freedom from silver leaf / tobacco whitefly (*Bemesia tabaci*) on bedding begonia plants (*Begonia semperflorens*).

Note: each of the above examples shows the addition of:

- (i). the suffix '- PZ' after 'Plant Passport', to denote a 'protected zone' passport, and
- (ii). the six-letter EPPO code (e.g. XANTPR or BEMITA) relevant to the specific protected zone pest(s).

For 'Protected Zone' plant passports, it is a legal requirement that these are attached to the smallest relevant trade unit, from the initial supplier through to the end user i.e. to the final customer (see information on 'Attachment of the Plant Passport' below).

Attachment of the Plant Passport

(Section courtesy of <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/issuing-plant-passports-to-trade-plants-in-the-eu>)

Under the new regulations the plant passport must be attached to the smallest package in which you transport your plants or plant products. If you move the same commodity on pallets, boxes, trays, or in bags, the plant passport must be attached to each of those individual units.

Multiple plant species can be listed on a single plant passport, as long as traceability is provided for all regulated plants or plant products listed on the plant passport (Section C can assist with this).

If there is a mix of plants on a trolley, then the passport may only be attached to the trolley if it is going directly to retail. The passport must be attached to the trolley itself, and cannot travel separately with a driver.

Plants or plant products on the trolley can have a passport attached to that trolley at any stage of the supply chain, if they are:

- homogeneous in composition (of the same species and in the same format) and origin, and
- heading to the same destination.

You can also issue a plant passport for an individual plant or for a single unit, such as a box, tray, bag or bundle. The passport can be:

- a label,
- a sticker,
- on a care label or
- in a paper form, but attached to the unit in question.

For plant passports supplied to final users by means of distance contract, for example online sales, you can attach the plant passport:

- to the plant or container, as a label, a sticker, on a care label, or in a paper form but attached to the unit, or
- on the delivery note, if that is travelling in the package or box with the plant, or
- on the outside of the box or packet that the plant or plant products is travelling in.

Retention of Plant Passports

All 'registered, authorised, professional operators' (RAPOs) must retain, for a minimum of three years, a record of any plant passports they issue in association with the goods that they trade. In practice, this information should already be evident from the existing production systems and/or print records of the business. It is important that plants and plant products which the business imports have correct passports on receipt, and that when a RAPO issues a replacement plant passport, the original passport or its content should also be retained. RAPOs should make any records available, as required, relating to plants sold with passports to other businesses in the supply chain.

All other 'professional operators' should retain records of suppliers from whom they purchased plants and plant products with associated passports. Any incorrect or invalid plant passports should be brought to the attention of PHIB staff.

The term professional operator includes (but may not be limited to) nurseries, garden centres, landscape contractors, councils, retail multiples, florists, fresh produce sellers and market traders.

Monitoring Critical Production Points in any RAPO

Businesses authorised to issue passports must identify and monitor critical points and/or risks in their production and supply processes, with respect to plant health. A nominated, competent person in the business will be responsible for ensuring such regular examinations take place, and a record of this monitoring should be held in the business for at least three years.

Plant Health Inspection Branch will provide training support, to help businesses achieve this obligation.

Further Information

This guidance is current at the time of release. Updates will be forthcoming as any new legislative measures come into effect.

For further information on registering as a professional operator, authorisation to issue passports for plants or for any other related matters, please initially refer to the DAERA Plant and Tree Health website at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/new-plant-health-regulation>.

You can email any specific queries to planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk or contact your regional DAERA Plant Health Inspector.