

## Plant Reception Unit

### Introduction

Each of the RHS Gardens has a Plant Reception Unit which receives plants brought into the garden. The Plant Reception Unit is designed and operated to minimise the risk of introducing pests and diseases and is part of a number of important measures and initiatives set out in the RHS Plant Health Policy (RHS Intranet/Our Teams/ Science/ Plant Health).

### Assessing plant risk

Before acquiring **any plant material** checks should be made as to the significance of associated pests and diseases. These checks should include consulting:

- appropriate Garden Managers;
- relevant RHS scientific staff; and
- guidance documents on high risk plants and high risk pests and diseases (RHS Intranet/Our Teams/ Science/ Plant Health/Guidance Documents).

Plant material identified as requiring a period of isolation for pest and disease assessment should be brought directly to the Plant Reception Unit following the procedures set out below. After the period of assessment is complete, plants should immediately be taken back by their designated section or further instruction given to the Propagation team as to how they should be managed.

It is envisaged that plants entering the garden will generally have been sourced and grown at a reputable nursery; that they will meet the highest quality standards; and are not susceptible to significant pests or diseases. When sourcing plants consideration should be given to the form of plant material to be introduced (e.g. seed, dormant cuttings, root balled plants) and the origin (UK, EU or non-EU; nursery with a good reputation for producing healthy plants).

Prior to arrival, plants will be categorised as high, medium or low risk (see table below). The holding time will depend on plant species, growth stage, source and time required for inspection. Guidance must be sought from the Plant Health Team if the propagation team member is unsure.

<b>High risk:</b> inspection by appropriate scientific and Curatorial staff.	<b>Medium risk:</b> inspection by assigned Curatorial staff.	<b>Low risk:</b> inspection; no containment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plants from countries other than the UK, including</li> <li>• Plants from UK botanic gardens</li> <li>• Plants susceptible to high-risk pests and diseases (refer to intranet and Plant Health team for guidance)</li> <li>• Root balled plants with imported soil</li> <li>• Donated material from private collections with unknown history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Container-grown plants from UK nurseries</li> <li>• Container-grown plants from other RHS gardens</li> <li>• Cutting raised liner/plugs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial seed raised plugs, liners &amp; cuttings</li> <li>• Commercial micro propagated plugs and liners.</li> <li>• Plants from the Wisley plant centre which have been on site for over three months</li> <li>• Dormant bulbs &amp; rhizomes</li> <li>• Bedding plants</li> </ul>
<b>Holding time: 12 weeks in active growth</b>	<b>Holding time: 4 weeks in active growth</b>	<b>Holding time: 0 weeks</b>

Material arriving at the Plant Reception Unit must be accompanied by the following information:

- designated team and contact name;
- plants from countries outside of the EU require a phytosanitary certificate;
- plants from other EU countries require plant passport and/or phytosanitary certificate;
- any other relevant information, e.g. transfer documents; and
- intended planting date.

Large batches of plants such as those for landscaping that cannot be accommodated in the reception unit should be assessed on a case by case basis with final sign off from the Deputy Curator or Curator. In all cases these plants should have a specific risk assessment and held as a batch in isolation from the garden plant collections until declared free from pests and diseases.

### **On arrival of plants in the Plant Reception Unit**

- Notify Reception team member / Propagation Team Leader in advance of arrival.
- Complete plant accession documents and pass on to Plant Records. Temporary labels will then be sent directly to reception. Accessioning is the responsibility of the team who will use the plants, not the propagation team member.
- Complete Plant Check-in Sheet with Propagation team member and sign in the stock.
- Assist Propagation team member with unpacking and moving plants into the reception area.
- Plants should be inspected on arrival for signs and symptoms of pests and diseases and rejected if they are not of an appropriate quality.
- Dispose of all packing material; packaging should not be reused or stored.

### **Plant Reception Unit procedures**

Casual access to the reception unit is not allowed, the doors are kept locked and access is restricted to nominated members of the Propagation Team. Where plants need to be assessed or have specific cultural operations undertaken by others, access must be sought from the Propagation Team Leader and the procedures set out below must be followed:

- Access is restricted to nominated staff
- Footwear is to be cleaned and sanitised when leaving the facility with disinfectant
- Disinfect hands with an alcohol gel before and after working in the units
- Tools to be kept specifically for plant reception use
- Use new pots and trays when potting-on is required
- Sanitise hand tools between operations and after use with suitable disinfectant such as Propellar or Virkon
- Plant debris to be bagged and sent to garden burning site
- Maintain weed-free areas inside and outside the structures
- All surfaces to be cleaned and sanitised between batches of plants
- Structures will be pressure washed and disinfected each spring and autumn with suitable disinfectant such as Hyperox
- High risk plants should be isolated from other plants within the reception units, for example by enclosing under insect-proof cloche and standing pots in drip trays
- Batches of plants should be kept together and not allowed to come into contact with other plants
- Dispose of all packing materials
- Ensure record sheets are completed.

### **Pest and disease monitoring (undertaken by Propagation Team Leader or designated team member)**

- Use blue & yellow sticky traps per batch of plants as needed.
- Undertake daily inspection of plants when carrying out cultural tasks
- Undertake weekly plant and trap inspection
- Any observations of pest or disease must be recorded, the Team Leader informed, and advice sought for a suitable control measure
- Detected pest and disease of significance should be highlighted to the Plant Health team (The Plant Health & Seed Inspectorate must be contacted if significant pests or diseases are identified or if there are reasonable grounds to suspect their presence).

### **Further guidance and resources on plant health**

- RHS Intranet (Our Teams/ Science/ Plant Health)
- Guidelines on Legislation, Import Practices and Plant Quarantine for Botanic Gardens and Kindred Institutions. Compiled by H. Long, F. Inches & K. Treseder. Edited by J. Cheney. Plant Network 2006 ([www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/plantnetwork-plant-health-guidelines](http://www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/plantnetwork-plant-health-guidelines))
- National Trust Plant Quarantine and Biosecurity Guidance Notes, 2008 ([www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/national-trust-plant-quarantine-biosecurity-guidance-notes](http://www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/national-trust-plant-quarantine-biosecurity-guidance-notes)), specifically:
  1. Sourcing plants
    - 2a. Handling brought-in plants and quarantine areas – general advice
    - 2b Handling brought-in plants and quarantine areas – for gardens of significant plant collections and the plant conservation programme
- Parks and Gardens – Biosecurity Best Practice Protocols, Food and Environment Research Agency, 2012 ([www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/parks-gardens-biosecurity-best-practice-protocols](http://www.plantnetwork.org/links/plant-health-links/parks-gardens-biosecurity-best-practice-protocols))

## Appendix 1 – Plant Reception Unit Site Plans

### a) RHS Garden Harlow Carr

To be inserted

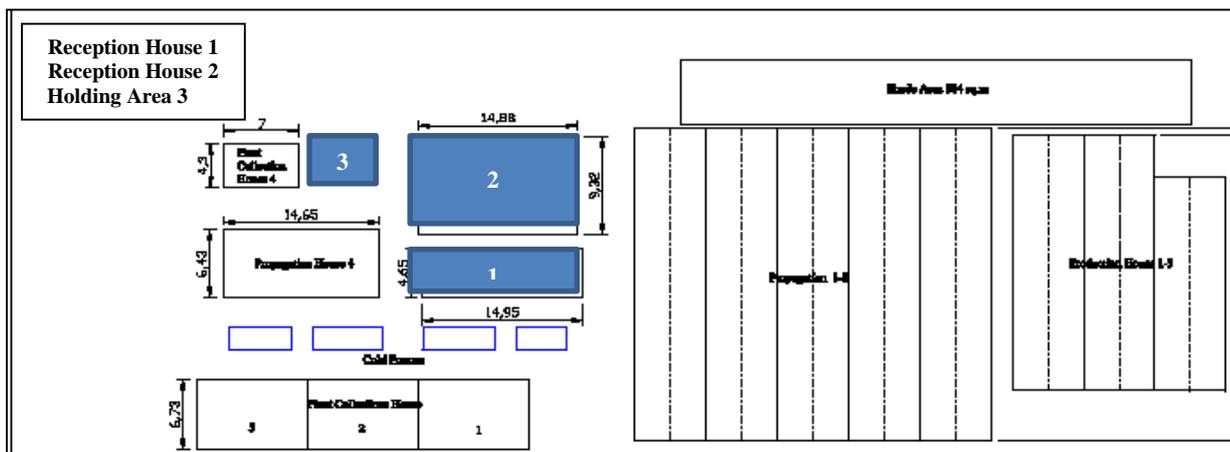
### b) RHS Garden Hyde Hall

To be inserted

### c) RHS Garden Rosemoor

To be inserted

### d) RHS Garden Wisley



The Propagation Unit has two dedicated enclosed structures and a holding area for the reception of plants into the garden.

- Plant Reception House 1 (heated glasshouse, min. night temp 10°C)
- Plant Reception House 2 (unheated polythene tunnel)
- Holding area 3 (Outdoor standing down space)

The reception houses are insect proof to some degree, but should not be viewed as providing containment, e.g. mites and fungal spores many enter or leave the facility. Their function is to segregate new plants for assessment to minimise the risk of pests and diseases entering the garden. There are a number of insect-proof cages, cloches and isolation trays inside the structures for further containment if required.

**Appendix 2**  
**Plant Check-in Sheet**

Date:

Plant name:
Designated team:
Garden destination:
Contact name:
Completed plant accession form: <input type="checkbox"/>
Other documents: (list)

Risk: estimated holding time (weeks)		
High <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Low <input type="checkbox"/>

Observations & action points
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**Signed in:**

Propagation staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Garden staff: \_\_\_\_\_