

Passports in Hand – Now What About the Phyto?

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Local Convention Chair

In order to facilitate your travelling to Vancouver with plants, here is some information about getting the necessary documentation for bringing gesneriads into Canada, as well as back home. Most of this information about bringing plants into Canada will refer to attendees coming from the US. Attendees from other countries will also need to get a phytosanitary certificate but from their own country's equivalent of the Animal Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS), a US federal agency.

In many states, an appointment can be made and the APHIS inspector will come to your home. The fees are different in each state (a fixed or a variable rate depending on travel or other factors.) I would suggest doing your research now and having the inspection done within a week of your date of departure. [This web site](#) will give you information on whom to contact in your state.

Before having the plants inspected, you will need to have the following specific information available (this information pertains both to phytos obtained before coming to Canada and when leaving Canada). In some areas you may be able to enter this information on line before your inspection appointment.

- Origin (your home address is OK; use the hotel address when you obtain your phyto in Canada);
- Destination (the convention hotel address is fine, or your home address when departing Canada);
- Means of travel (e.g., airplane, including flight number, or car);
- Number of boxes;
- The border crossing you will be using. For flights coming into Vancouver, you can simply note "Vancouver International Airport" (and your airport when returning home). For those driving from/to Seattle, the car border crossing is "Blaine/Peace Arch."
- The number of species and hybrids in each genus. If you have one *Sinningia* hybrid and two species, list "*Sinningia* sp – 3 plants." Species or hybrid names are not needed;
- Cuttings can be noted similarly (e.g., *Kohleria* sp – 7 bags of cuttings);
- Growing medium of your plants should be artificial or soilless mix.

Also keep the following in mind when your plants are inspected at home:

- You will be attending a show and will be bringing the plants back home afterwards;
- If the inspector is not familiar with gesneriads, inform him or her that they are houseplants and would not survive outside.
- You can also mention that there are no gesneriads listed on CITES (the international code protecting endangered species).
- If you are asked, you should confirm that your plants or cuttings are brought as gifts and not for sale.

When you get your certificate, you may bring in fewer than you have had inspected but not more.

For your return home with your plants, we have arranged for several inspectors to be present over an expanded time period to make the process reasonably smooth. Through the information supplied with your registration, we will schedule inspections to accommodate your needs as much as we can.

Most of the convention attendees from countries other than the US are well experienced with their countries' inspection requirements. For attendees travelling back to the US, all the information listed above will be needed for the Canadian inspectors. For those returning home with show plants, a "re-export certificate" will be issued. The cost per phyto certificate should be in the range of \$20 - \$25 CA, but the actual cost will depend on several factors.

I hope this information will encourage you to plan to bring show plants to convention. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me, [Bill Price](#). Looking forward to seeing you at the convention!