

What to Expect in your Annual Nursery Certification Inspection

Each nursery must be inspected annually in order to be certified. It is the responsibility of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) Plant Protection Division to prevent, as far as possible, exotic pests from entering (or leaving) Alabama. Nursery certification verifies that the nursery has been inspected and found to grow plants in a manner that minimizes the risk of moving plant pests from one location to another. Certification also enables nurseries to sell plants in another state without having to be certified or pay a fee in that state as well. This provides a valuable service to the nursery/greenhouse/landscape industry in Alabama, as well as protecting the natural and agricultural resources of our state.

Nursery Inspection Procedure

Each nursery must be inspected annually per the Code of Alabama, Title 2, Chapter 25 and the Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 80-10-1. The annual nursery inspection should be timed to coincide with the time that the nursery has the greatest amount of stock present. The following is the general procedure that ADAI Plant Protection inspectors should follow during annual nursery certification inspections.

I. Pre-Inspection

- Inspectors should make appointment with owner or manager in order to assure that a person in authority is present to discuss new regulations and sign compliance agreements.
- The forms (compliance agreements, inspection report, WPS, etc.) should be completed in advance as much as possible to save time while at the nursery.
- The nursery registration fees must be current before an inspection is conducted.

II. Inspection

- The following information is required for registration records, to tailor pest information for the nursery, to help determine what compliance agreements or certification documents may be required, and to provide ADAI with pest risk information. Information provided is regulatory in nature and is not shared with other states, except as is required in the Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 80-10-1-.06.
 - Size of nursery – Acreage? Square footage?
 - Telephone numbers - office, cell, fax
 - Physical address
 - Mailing Address
 - Contact names and numbers
 - Email address(es) that someone monitors
 - GPS reading in decimal degrees
 - Wholesale or retail?
 - More than one location?
 - More than one business name?
 - Interstate shipper? (This applies even if shipping interstate to another location of the same company.) If so, what states? What plants?

- Does the nursery purchase any of its plants? If so, what are the sources - including plants brought in from out-of-state sites of same company. Ask if nursery purchases host plants for diseases of concern from states positive for that pest (Ex. Boxwood from OR), then ask follow-up questions, if necessary
 - International shipper? If so, what countries? What plants?
- Compliance agreements (CA) and Certificates of Quarantine Compliance (CQCs): Compliance agreements should be reviewed on an annual basis (as part of the annual nursery inspection). CQCs are a type of compliance agreement and can be written to continue for several months so that the inspector is not required to inspect every shipment. Either CAs or CQCs are better alternatives to inspection of every shipment, as each saves time for both the nursery grower and inspector in the long run.
 - Imported fire ant, Japanese beetle, nematode soil test (nurseries that ship to California), sweet potato (vegetable and ornamental), possibly others as regulations and quarantines in Alabama and other states change.
 - For information on issues of concern to other states, refer to the National Plant Board website at <http://www.nationalplantboard.org/>.
- Worker Protection Standards Inspection
 - Should be performed when workers are present
- Nursery Plant and Environ Inspection
 - Inspectors should note conditions of plants and environs.
 - Note any pesticides being used and storage/usage.
 - Inspectors should identify or take photos of significant pests - weeds, insects, pathogens. Samples should be taken of unknown pests.
- Additional Activities by Inspectors:
 - Distribute information sheets/brochures on pests of concern or significance to ADAI or that nursery.
 - Review shipping tag (nursery certificate tag) requirements with nursery grower.
 - Ask if there are recent problems that need to be discussed.
 - Find out best time of year for inspection (i.e. when the most plants are present), and make note for future inspections.
 - Provide important information - ADAI personnel contacts, USDA contacts, recent or upcoming changes in regulations, etc.
 - Discuss any questions that the nursery grower has. If they ask a question for which the inspector does not know the answer, the inspector should find out and get back to the nursery grower.
 - Provide links to any important or useful websites.
 - Make appointment for follow-up compliance visit if problems were noted.

III. Post Inspection

- Inspector should let nursery grower know the outcome of the inspection.
- Inspector should provide answers to any unresolved questions.
- Conduct follow-up compliance visit, if necessary.