Everything you always wanted to know about the WSDA Plant Services Program*

* but were afraid to ask....

WSDA Plant Protection Division,
Plant Services Program 2021
1891 – Board of Horticulture created

- May suggest regulations for inspection and disinfection of anything that may spread contagious diseases among fruit and fruit trees.
- Appoint "Inspector of Fruit Pests" to:
  - See that regulations are made known
  - Inspect orchards, nurseries and other places suspected of infestation
  - Direct treatment of infected materials, engage court if necessary.

1895 – Nursery Licensing begins

- Board shall make regulations for inspection, disinfection and quarantining. Penalty for violation: misdemeanor/$25-100 fine. Each board member is "Inspector of Fruit Pests," may employ deputies in each county. Add penalty provisions.
- **New provisions to prevent pest introductions**
  - Plant shippers and sellers must be licensed
  - Licensees must notify Board of all shipments at least 24 hours in advance
  - Penalty established for importing plant materials infested with San Jose Scale or Wooly Aphis. Misdemeanor, $25-200 fine, up to 60 days in jail. Any imported plant material infested with any injurious insect shall be disinfected, cost charged to owner.
When WSDA was created in 1913-

• 10 horticultural ‘inspectors at large’
• Licensees: 147 nurserymen & 109 nursery ‘agents’
• License Fees: $5 and $1/year
• Many inspectors were still on horseback....

“...it was shown that one inspector mounted could do the work of three on foot.”
Today the program has 10 Environmental Specialists statewide who inspect production and retail nurseries, to ensure plants offered for sale are free of harmful pests and plant diseases. There are over 5,300 nursery licensees in Washington state.

**Goals**

- Protect Washington’s natural resources and agriculture from harmful insects, weeds and plant diseases
- Facilitate the movement of Washington’s agricultural products.
Program is supported by user fees

- half nursery license fees, half export inspection fees
  (AG local funds)

Major activities include:

- Licensing and inspection of retail & production nurseries, landscapers
- Inspection & certification of ag exports, domestic & internationally
We enforce 24 WSDA plant health quarantines

- 80% of retail nursery stock for sale in Washington is imported from Oregon & California, Canada
- Nurseries must notify WSDA when receiving stock, hold for inspection.
- We check plant lists and apply pest quarantines
ALL plants for sale must be-

- 100% Free of quarantine pests;
- 100% Free of pests that would be harmful if allowed to become established;
- ‘Practically free’ of common pests- under 2% infestation level or an amount expected to result from good cultural practices
Who Needs a Nursery License?

Any person who handles or sells horticultural plants is considered a “nursery dealer” and is required to have a license for each business location where plants are sold. RCW 15.13.280

Examples of Businesses Required to have a Nursery License:

- Wholesale and retail nurseries, growers and garden centers.
- Landscape maintenance companies who install plants for customers.
- Grocery and warehouse stores that offer plants for sale.
- Landscapers who buy in, grow or hold plants for sale or installation.
- Brokers located in Washington who buy and sell, but do not hold plants.
- Pet and aquarium stores that sell aquatic plants.
20% Nursery License Surcharge funds industry research

A 20% surcharge on all nursery licenses funds research projects of benefit to:

- Ornamental growers
- Turf and bulb growers
- Landscapers
- Retail Garden Centers
- Fruit tree and grapevine nurseries

We partner with WSU researchers
We license Christmas Tree Growers

- Anyone harvesting more than 400 trees a year must license—fees are used to fund industry research
NEW - additional inspector for online enforcement

In 2020, we established an inspector dedicated to searching websites offering plants for sale into Washington State.

Proactive enforcement of state quarantines stops hundreds of potential pest introductions every month (before plants are shipped).
Quarantine Violations in Nurseries-a typical year

~700 nursery inspections:

- No Nursery License, 31%
- Plant Pest Infestation, 15%
- Notification Rule, 37%
- Plant Disease Quarantines, 16%
- Prohibited Plants For Sale, 1%
Prohibited Plant Quarantine
WAC 16-752

- WSDA Noxious Weed Seed & Plant Quarantine prohibits the sale or distribution of 100 aquatic & terrestrial plant species, like *Buddleia davidii*, *knotweed*, *scotch broom*
Federal Quarantine Enforcement

- We inspect & regulate nurseries for federally regulated *Phytophthora ramorum* (Sudden Oak Death)
- We collaborate with USDA/WSU/other states to provide nurseries with Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid disease.
Status of P. ramorum in Washington:

- The disease is NOT FOUND in Washington's natural lands.
- Washington nurseries are inspected & repeatedly sampled if a positive plant is found (one interstate shipper in 2020)
- One public garden is monitored for symptoms
Besides inspecting imports, we certify plant/ag exports. All inspectors are **ACOs** (USDA Authorized Certifying Officials)

- Interstate shipment, or international export;
- Issue over 25,000 federal phytosanitary certificates annually;

✓ We certify over $2 billion in ag products annually
We conduct hundreds of growing season inspections annually.
We inspect thousands of bare-root fruit trees for export to Canada each spring.
We certify over 10 million BF of log & lumber exports monthly (China, Japan, Korea)
Hay exports from the Kittitas Valley to Japan, China, UAE are year round (high quality timothy for race horses)
Weed Free Forage is required in all federal lands.
PISCES is our web based portal for all program services & activities!
WSDA programs support the production of virus tested planting stock for higher yields, quality & longevity, and to meet export requirements.
WSDA Fruit Tree Certification Program co-located at WSU IAREC, Prosser

We operate a bio-indexing greenhouse; molecular & nematode testing labs

We register & certify 90,000 apple, pear and cherry mother trees annually!
Grapevine Certification Program

- Registration, inspection & testing of over 200,000 mother vines at 5 certified WA nurseries;
- We contract with WSU to conduct testing for us, with assessment funds.
Assessment on Fruit Trees & Grapevines funds WSDA Clean Planting Stock Programs

- Annual 1% assessment on fruit tree sales and 5% on grapevine sales, funds research and WSDA Planting Stock Certification Programs
- This provides WA fruit growers with virus tested clean planting stock, for higher yields and quality
We certify 3,500 acres of seed potatoes annually ensuring a healthy crop (135 varieties). WA grows 8 billion pounds of potatoes for consumption/year!

In Whatcom, Spokane, Kittitas counties & Hawaii winter post harvest testing
New directions for the future

What will field inspection look like?
Drones to inspect remote sites
Dog teams to sniff out plant viruses and fungal pathogens
Increase online enforcement efforts
Facilitate the movement of hemp plant products
Plans to build a planting stock certification center in Prosser (labs, offices, meeting space)

New directions for the future
Now you know!

http://agr.wa.gov

Contact 360-902-1874