BritishFlora
Planting the seeds for a greener tomorrow

BIOSECURITY POLICY

GENERAL

Pests and diseases can be spread by numerous methods and our biosecurity policy must provide a detailed approach to preventing, identifying and controlling these. This document outlines the policies and procedures which control the ingress, spread and egress of pests and diseases on the nursery.

PREVENTING INGRESS

The primary control method is to prevent harmful pathogens from entering the nursery in the first instance. Some less harmful pathogens, such as powdery mildew which are in high concentrations, make prevention of ingress impossible. Our policy focusses on minimizing high risk invasions.

VISITORS

All visitors are by appointment only. Clear signage directs all visitors to report to the office upon arrival where they will sign in. The movement of visitor's cars is restricted to the car park, so they do not move into production areas. All visitors are always then accompanied by a member of staff.

STAFF

Staff control their biosecurity risk by having dedicated footwear which never leave the nursery so cannot introduce pathogens and by sterilising footwear where necessary. Staff are responsible for cleaning hand tools after use and disposing of hand tools if used on suspected diseased plant material.

WATER

Water comes from an onsite reservoir. Water is not recycled so no sterilization system is required.

IMPORTED PLANTS

We do not import plants of any type into the UK. Plants are bought in from other UK nurseries. The source nurseries must assure their biosecurity measures to our satisfaction and only provide UK grown stock. All plants are thoroughly inspected upon arrival using a check sheet to ensure no harmful pathogens or invasive species are present.

OTHER MATERIALS

All other materials such as machinery, trollies and trays are considered low risk of harboring pests and diseases. Foreign packaging will not be used and where bought-in material has been in contact with soil or plant parts will be sterilised before use.

TUNNELS

We operate ten (10) tunnels which are used for propagation and growth. The use of the tunnels ensure that outbreaks can be confined to discrete areas. Tunnels are also thoroughly cleaned and weeded on a regular basis and disinfected annually or when the tunnels run empty of stock.

OUTDOOR GROWING AREAS

Our plants spend most of their growing time outside. We have discrete growing areas which help control the spread of disease. We can grow species away from potential sources of pests and disease, mutually susceptible species in difference areas of the nursery or grow one species in several points in the nursery to ensure that stock will still be available should disease break out in one area.

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CLEANING

Nursery staff have responsibility for ensuring that all equipment is periodically cleaned in order to aid biosecurity and help extend the life of the equipment.

MAMMALS AND BIRDS

Mammals can destroy stock, so deer and rabbit fencing has been installed around the nursery perimeter. Seeds attractive to birds and mammals are kept in tunnels until the plants are large enough to eliminate the risk. Bird scarers have been placed in several locations around the nursery and are periodically moved to improve effectiveness.

GROWING REGIME

Plants are grown to ensure they are as healthy and strong as possible; stronger plants can resist the incursion of disease more effectively than weaker ones. During delicate stages of their life cycle, plants are kept in tunnels where the physical protection can prevent incursion of disease and the confined space allows for ease of treatment. Airflow, temperature and light are monitored and adjusted as required.

PLANT HUSBANDRY REGIME

Nursery management are trained in the identification of pest and disease and follow procedures to report them and control them. Weeds and sick plants can harbor pests and diseases so are removed when identified. Crops are rotated to ensure that pests and diseases cannot build up in specific areas over time.
Irrigation pattern is essential for plants susceptible to Phytophthoras and other water-borne diseases. Plants are irrigated well and infrequently to allow long periods when the foliage can be dry between periods of irrigation which can break the growing cycle and build-up of the disease.

SPECIES-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

When there are recommended measures specific to a plant/pathogen relationship, these will be taken as part of this policy.

REPORTING

All staff must report all signs of pest or disease directly to the Nursery Manager who can personally assess the finding.

PREVENTING EGRESS

We are responsible for ensuring that pests and diseases do not leave the nursery and infect other areas. If pathogens are identified on the nursery, procedures are followed in the best way to control or destroy infected stock to minimize spreading.
If any pests or diseases were identified once stock has left the nursery, the plant passport system allows traceability of the plants back to the suspected area of infection. Using the plant passport system will mitigate any further spread of pests or diseases.

POLICY REVIEW

The Managing Director will discuss biosecurity policy changes with the Nursery Manager at each monthly management meeting. They will discuss potential improvements to policy and practice and agree changes which will be implemented immediately or at the end of the growing season, as appropriate to the change.

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