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International Traveler: Soil and Soil-Related Products

Last Modified:

The United States restricts or prohibits the entry of many agricultural products, which can carry foreign pests and diseases that harm American agriculture and our environment. Help us keep American agriculture healthy by following the guidance on this page about products you may want to bring into the United States.

Travelers entering the United States must declare all agricultural or wildlife products.

Travelers entering the United States must declare all agricultural or wildlife products to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials. You must also tell them if you visited a farm or were in contact with animals before traveling to the United States.

U.S. agricultural inspectors will examine your items to be sure they meet entry requirements and do not harbor harmful foreign pests or diseases. U.S. inspectors have the authority to make a final determination about whether your products can enter the country. We recommend that you keep receipts and original packaging of agricultural products as proof of their country of origin.

As long as you declare all of the agricultural products you are bringing with you, you will not face any penalties—even if an inspector determines

that they cannot enter the country.

Soil and Soil-Related Products that You CAN and CANNOT bring back to the United States

Need Help?

If you can't find your commodity listed above, browse the Agricultural Import Requirements Database.

If you still have questions about a particular plant or plant products (fruits, vegetables, plant parts, seeds, soil, or souvenirs made from wood or plants), contact us.

Phone: 877-770-5990 (toll-free)

Email: plantproducts.permits@usda.gov

Expand All

Soil

Soil from Canada: Soil from areas regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for soil-borne pests requires a permit. Soil from other parts of Canada may be imported into the United States without a permit and is subject only to inspection and verification of origin.

View the import requirements for soil from Canada, including the list of regulated areas

Soil from all other countries (and from Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and all U.S. territories) is prohibited from entering the United States without a permit or USDA-approved soil treatment.

Peat, Sand, Clay, and Rocks/Stones

Travelers must be able to prove to U.S. customs inspectors that imports of peat, sand, clay, and souvenir rocks or stones are entirely free of soil or any other organic matter (such as algae) before they can enter the United States.

Travelers are advised to contact USDA’s permitting staff at 1-866-524-5421 (toll-free) or by email at Pest.Permits@aphis.usda.gov for special guidance before bringing in materials such as these.

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