



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

Reporting of Suspicious Seed Packets from China
FDACS Collaboration with UF-IFAS

The **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** (FDACS) have alerted Floridians about unsolicited packages of seeds received through the mail. The USDA has also made FDACS aware that items (such as spoons, forks, spinners etc.) other than seeds have been reported in some unsolicited packages. The USDA believes this to be a type of "brushing" scam where unsolicited items are sent to allow the vendor to post false customer reviews and boost online sales.

There continues to be several reports from Florida residents that have received unsolicited packages, some of which have contained seeds. The types of the seed in the packages remains unknown at this time. The introduction of plant seeds into the United States is tightly regulated by the USDA. Seeds of unknown origin may constitute agricultural smuggling, may be invasive, may introduce pathogens, toxins, or plant and animal diseases, may pose a risk of foodborne illness, and may pose a threat to plant and animal health.

Many of the UF-IFAS extension offices already have a strong existing relationship with local FDACS-Division of Plant Industry (FDACS-DPI) offices. FDACS has requested UF-IFAS extension offices to be drop-off locations for these packages. **FDACS will only be retrieving packages containing seeds or plant material that are properly prepared for pickup. No other items will be retrieved.**

FDACS-DPI asks that for any of these suspected seed packages that are dropped off to any UF-IFAS Extension Offices to please complete the following procedure:

- **Only accept packages that have been opened and known to contain seed material. All unopened packages and packages containing other non-agricultural items should be maintained by the homeowner and they in turn should contact USDA APHIS Anti-Smuggling hotline at 1-800-877-3835 or SITC.mail@aphis.usda.gov**
- **Verify seed packets and mailing materials** were placed into a sealable plastic bag – this is important to determining the origin of the seeds
- **Do not open seed packets** and avoid opening outer packaging or mailing materials.
- Have homeowners **complete the form below** and attach to the specimen.
- Ask homeowners to file a report with FDACS at [FDACS.gov/seedbymail](https://www.fdacsgov.com/seedbymail). (For walk-ins, this isn't mandatory but recommended)
- **Contact your local FDACS-DPI office or contact the FDACS-DPI helpline** at 1-888-397-1517 to arrange for pickup of the packages. If you chose to call the DPI Helpline and you are routed to voicemail, please leave a message requesting pickup including location address to allow for the request to be routed to the appropriate region to schedule a pickup. Additionally, instructions for consumers regarding drop-off or pick-up of these packages can be found at [www.FDACSGOV.com/seedbymail](https://www.fdacsgov.com/seedbymail).

Unsolicited Seeds by Mail Specimen Submission

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Latitude / Longitude (if known): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

When did the package arrive?

Did you receive additional packages?

Were any seeds planted?

If so, provide location.

Did you order anything from an e-commerce site (ex. Amazon, Wish, etc.)

If so, provide website name:

Did you order any seeds this year? If so, what company did you order seeds from? When did the package arrive?

If you have any questions, please contact the FDACS-DPI Helpline at: 1-888-397-1517.