

**SAMPLE LETTER - APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION
IN PLANT RESCUE CENTER PROGRAM**

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/DMA CEP 3-09

OMB No. 1018-
Expires

Prospective PRC Institution

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in establishing a plant rescue center for plants imported into the United States in violation of permit requirements under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

At the present time, our office, the U.S. Management Authority for CITES, is required by CITES (Article VIII, paragraph 4) to consult with foreign officials in the country from which the plants were exported and to inform them that the plants were illegally imported into the United States and consequently seized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The purpose of this consultation is to determine whether the government of that country wishes the return, at its own expense, of the CITES-listed species of plants that have been confiscated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Our procedure is to write or fax foreign officials in the country of export to inform them that plants exported from their country are being held in the United States and that we will attempt to maintain the plants for 30 days, while awaiting their reply concerning the plants' return. We also point out that we cannot guarantee the viability of the specimens being held.

In order to better care for the plants and since the U.S. Department of Agriculture cannot maintain them at their facilities, the Division of Management Authority finds a plant rescue center willing to maintain the specimens for the 30-day waiting period (see enclosure). In rare cases we may extend this waiting period due to the distance between the United States and the country of export. The provisional assignment is made at the same time as our notification to the country of export.

The following working arrangements have been agreed upon by those organizations, now numbering 74, already involved with this program:

- 1) The plant rescue center must be a public botanical garden, arboretum, zoological park, or research institution and it must be a government entity or a governmentally or privately funded nonprofit entity.
- 2) The cooperators must be able to transfer, at their own expense, specimens from the U.S. Department of Agriculture port office to the plant rescue center. In most cases however, specimens will be mailed from the port office to the plant rescue center free of charge to the rescue center.

- 3) The U.S. Department of Agriculture maintains each seized shipment as a unit and the plant rescue center must accept and maintain the unit for the 30-day waiting period. It is necessary to maintain the identity of the unit in the event the country of export requests its return.
- 4) The plant rescue center may incorporate the specimens into its own collection if the country of export does not request their return within the 30-day waiting period. However, the specimens remain the property of the U.S. Government indefinitely.
- 5) After the 30-day waiting period, specimens may be displayed, propagated, or used for other purposes consistent with CITES. The plant rescue center may not trade, sell, or otherwise dispose of these specimens; propagules of these specimens, however, may be disposed of in this manner.

We appreciate your interest in establishing a plant rescue center and your concern in preserving endangered plants that might otherwise be lost due to their illegal importation into the United States.

If your organization is willing and able to perform the plant rescue center operation, as described above, please notify us. In your notification please provide a brief description of your greenhouse or display facilities (including space availability), the names and telephone numbers of any individuals authorized to accept plants on your behalf, and the mailing address where the plants should be sent (if different from your own). Also, if you are limited as to the type of plants you are able to maintain or the quantities you may be able to handle at one time, please list these limitations.

Sincerely,

Division of Management Authority

Enclosure

Notice

Information requested herein is purely voluntary. However, submission of requested information is required in order to become a plant rescue center. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number is displayed. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 1018-XXXX, which expires _____.

The reporting burden for this information collection is approximately 1 hour. This burden estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing the response letter. You may direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of the information collection to the Service Information Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mail Stop 222, Arlington Square, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20240.