

**CHAPTER 122. CERTIFICATION OF VIRUS-TESTED  
GERANIUMS**

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**Authority**

The provisions of this Chapter 122 issued under sections 3 and 17 of The Pennsylvania Plant Pest Act of 1937 (3 P. S. §§ 214-3 and 214-17), unless otherwise noted.

**Source**

The provisions of this Chapter 122 adopted May 18, 1979, effective May 19, 1979, 9 Pa.B. 1617, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 122.1. Purpose.**

Geraniums (*Pelargonium spp.*) may be certified as virus-tested when inspected, tested and found to be true-to-name and free from virus and virus-like diseases detectable by procedures outlined in this chapter. The Department is responsible for the implementation and operation of the program.

**§ 122.2. Definitions.**

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

*Department*—The Department of Agriculture of the Commonwealth.

*Elite nuclear block*—Plants which are derived from heat-treated meristem tip cultures, are culture indexed, have been indexed negative for recognized viruses and are used as the source of propagating material for the nuclear block.

*Increase block*—Plants which are produced directly from the nuclear block and are used as the source of propagating material for the production block.

*Index*—Testing a plant for virus infection by means of inoculation from the plant to be tested to an indicator plant or other standard procedures such as seriological detection.

*Indicator plant*—A woody or herbaceous plant used for detecting viruses.

*Nuclear block*—Plants which are produced directly from the elite nuclear block, have been indexed negative for recognized viruses and are used as the source of propagating material for the increase block.

*Off-type*—Possessing horticultural characteristics different from the variety or cultivar listed on the application.

*Production block*—Plants which are produced directly from the increase block and are used as the source of propagating material for saleable plants.

*Program*—The geranium certification program set forth in this chapter.

*Registered plant*—A plant which has been produced under the provisions of this chapter and is certified as virus-tested by the Department; this includes plants in elite nuclear, nuclear, increase and production blocks and saleable plants.

*Virus-infected*—The presence of a virus in a plant or plant part.

*Virus-like*—An agent such as a spiroplasma, mycoplasma or viroid which elicits symptoms similar to those caused by viruses.

*Virus-tested*—A plant which has been indexed negative for recognized viruses detectable by procedures outlined in this chapter.

### § 122.3. Requirements for registration and certification.

(a) *General.* Participation in the program is voluntary. Once a written request to participate in the program is received by the Department, no participant may withdraw until the end of the calendar year. Registration or certification of geraniums does not imply a warranty or guarantee on the part of the Department or any employe thereof beyond the terms of the program.

(b) *Responsibility of applicant.* The applicant shall be responsible for proper maintenance and indexing of registered plants being grown under the provisions of the program. The applicant shall be responsible for maintaining the identity and records of the propagation history of all registered plants in a manner approved by the Department.

(c) *Certification.* Certification shall conform with the following:

(1) All plants sold or advertised as virus-tested shall be certified by the Department.

(2) Only registered plants may be certified.

(d) *Requirements for certification as a registered plant.* Requirements for certification as a registered plant shall conform with the following:

(1) Registered plants shall be located in an environment in which insects are effectively controlled as approved by the Department.

(2) Registered plants shall be rooted and maintained in soil which has been freed of nematodes by methods approved by the Department.

(3) Blocks of registered plants shall be physically separated from each other in a manner approved by the Department.

(4) Registered plants shall be indexed or propagated from indexed plants.

(5) Registered plants shall be labeled as to variety by methods approved by the Department and shall not be off-type.

(6) Registered plants shall have a record kept of their propagation and indexing history.

(7) Registered plants shall be kept in thrifty growing condition, and pests and diseases shall be effectively controlled.

(8) Approved sanitary practices shall be used to prevent mechanical transmission of viruses to registered plants.

(9) Registered plants shall only be propagated from other registered plants or heat-treated meristem tip cultures. Saleable plants may not be used as a propagation source to produce registered plants.

(10) Registered plants, other than saleable plants, may not be shipped or sold without permission of the Department.

(11) Registered plants shall be less than 1 year old.

(12) Registered plants shall not be permitted to flower except for variety identification purposes.

(e) *Indexing*. Indexing shall conform with the following:

(1) Indexing shall be the responsibility of the applicant.

(2) Indexing techniques and indicator plants shall be approved by the Department and will be made available to interested persons upon request.

(3) All registered plants in nuclear elite and nuclear blocks shall be indexed.

(4) A representative sample, as approved and selected by the Department, of increase block plants shall be indexed.

(5) The Department may require the indexing or reindexing of any registered plant which is suspected of being virus-infected.

(f) *Propagation*. Propagation shall conform with the following:

(1) Elite nuclear plants shall only be propagated from heat-treated meristem tip culture or other elite nuclear plants.

(2) Nuclear plants may only be propagated from elite nuclear plants.

(3) Increase block plants may only be propagated from elite nuclear and nuclear plants.

(4) Production block plants may only be propagated from increase block plants.

(5) Saleable plants may only be propagated from production block plants.

(6) Plants propagated from saleable plants are not certified.

(g) *Eligibility*. A geranium (*Pelargonium spp.*) variety with stable horticultural characteristics, when approved by the Department, is eligible for entry in the program. New varieties entering the program shall go through heat treatment, meristem tip culture and the prescribed propagation route before they can be sold or advertised as certified as virus-tested.

#### § 122.4. Inspection and testing.

The Department reserves the right to inspect the applicant's facilities, techniques, plants and records to insure that the provisions of the program are being followed. The Department also reserves the right to conduct independent indexing on registered plants.

**§ 122.5. Labeling.**

(a) The method of labeling shipments of registered plants shall be approved by the Department, and the labels shall contain the following information:

- (1) Variety.
- (2) A number which can be used to trace the plant's origin.
- (3) The fact that the plants are certified as virus-tested by the Department.

(b) In addition, each shipment shall contain a cover letter with the following information:

- (1) The fact that the plants originated from virus-indexed plants.
- (2) The indicators or antisera, or both, used to test the plants for viruses.
- (3) The specific viruses the procedures set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) should detect.
- (4) General procedures to help prevent reinfection with viruses.

**§ 122.6. Enforcement.**

Registration or certification may be refused, suspended or cancelled for any plant or group of plants if:

- (1) The requirements of this chapter have not been met.
- (2) The plant is found to be virus-infected or off-type.
- (3) For any reason, the identity of a plant, its propagation history or its indexing history becomes uncertain or has not been maintained properly.
- (4) The status of plants produced under the provisions of the program is knowingly misrepresented.

**§ 122.7. Application and fees.**

(a) *Application.* Application for certification can be made by contacting the Department of Agriculture, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110.

(b) *Fees.* There is no fee charged for certification of geraniums as virus-tested.

**§ 122.8. Warranty.**

(a) This program is designed to insure the production of a superior product by eliminating most viruses from geranium propagating stock. Neither the Department nor any applicant can guarantee that all certified geraniums are free of all viruses.

(b) The responsibility of an applicant or the Department for the maintenance of registered plants under the provisions of the program is terminated after the plants are received by a customer.

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