
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLANT HEALTH- 12 May 2023

GET INVOLVED GUIDE

Both our health and the health of our planet depend on plants. Plants are the source of the oxygen we breathe, much of the food we eat, the fibers that make our clothes and natural building materials. Yet, up to 40 percent of food crops are lost due to plant pests and diseases every year. This is affecting food security and agriculture, the main source of income for vulnerable rural communities.

Climate change and human activities are also affecting plant health, altering ecosystems and damaging biodiversity while creating new niches for pests to thrive. International travel and trade, which has tripled in volume in the last decade, is making pests and diseases appear in places they were never seen before.

Keeping plants healthy is essential for life on earth and all of us have a role to play. Join us for the global call to action this #PlantHealth Day on 12 May 2023.

Why an International Day of Plant Health?

The United Nations designated 12 May the International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) to raise global awareness of how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect biodiversity and the environment, and boost economic development. The Day is a key legacy of the International Year of Plant Health 2020.

How to get involved

1. **Make a #PlantHealth commitment this #PlantHealthDay.** Everyone can contribute to plant health. Get people talking about #PlantHealth by posting interesting plant health facts on your channels this #PlantHealthDay. A Trello Board for material to share will be shared soon.
2. **Organize an event Plan an event or promotional activity to get the public involved** – at universities, through farmer forums, festivals, fairs or tree planting ceremonies. You could also host a public lecture, panel or roundtable with government officials, educators, scientists, farmers and private sector representatives.
3. **Invite national or local media** to cover your event or to talk about your organization's work on protecting plant health.
4. **Bring the IDPH to your town or city.** Why not approach municipality, outdoor advertisers, air and seaport authorities, or transportation companies to discuss

the possibility of displaying IDPH products - such as the poster, web banner or promo video - on websites, billboards, at airports, ferry ports, buses, trams, in city subways, cinemas and more. Often, they are willing to promote a good cause on a pro-bono basis.

5. **Young people: save plants, save the planet!** Educators can include plant health in lesson plans or youth activities and celebrate #PlantHealthDay. Check out our Activity Book to learn about the importance of plant health and simple actions we can all take to help keep plants safe. Discover how plant health, our health, environmental protection and climate change – are all connected.

CALL TO ACTION:

1. **Governments, policy makers and legislators** need to prioritize plant health and protection, recognizing that it is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG2, Zero Hunger. Policies and legislation need to address and prevent pest and disease outbreaks and promote sustainable pests and pesticides management, while strengthening monitoring and reporting, and facilitating safe trade. They should ensure compliance with international plant health standards, invest in plant-health innovations, research and capacity development and empower national and regional plant protection organizations.
2. The **general public** should be aware of the risks involved in bringing plants and plant products across borders that may harbor pests and diseases. We need to be careful when ordering plants and plant products through channels such as e-commerce with postal services that bypass regular phytosanitary controls. It is important to purchase from reputable companies that provide international phytosanitary certification for safe trade of plants and plant products.
3. **Media professionals** can help communicate plant health information and key messages, including in local languages, to the broadest possible audience.
4. **Schoolchildren** can learn that plants can get “sick”, what this means for food security, biodiversity, the environment, and our economy, and how they can warn their family about the risks of “hitchhiking pests” that often travel with plants and plant products.
5. **Farmers** can prevent the spread of pests by using only certified pest-free seeds and seedlings; and regularly monitoring, controlling and reporting the occurrence of unusual pests on their farms. They should adopt environmentally friendly pest management practices – including those based on biological approaches that do not kill pollinators and use beneficial insects and organisms.
6. **Non-Government Organizations** and cooperatives working directly with farmers can raise their awareness of best practices for preventing and managing pests; and

provide them with practical support in implementing these practices. They can coordinate actions among different plant health stakeholders especially at the local level.

7. **Donors** need to be regularly informed about opportunities for investing in new and existing plant health initiatives and technologies.
8. The **private sector** should promote environmentally friendly products and practices and invest in phytosanitary research and development.
9. The **transportation and trade sectors** should implement international standards, comply with existing phytosanitary legislation, contribute to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standard setting process and be aware of innovative technologies such as electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos).

Further information and promotional materials will be available soon on the [IDPH website](#).

For inquiries and further information, please contact IDPH@fao.org.