

Bringing Plant Tissue Culture into Tasmania

There are pests and diseases on the mainland that we don't have in Tasmania – and we intend to keep it that way. As an island state, Tasmania has always had a biosecurity advantage over the rest of the country, which in practice means lower pest, disease and weed pressures on our lifestyle, our environment and our primary industries. We are capitalising on this advantage by having a rigorous and specifically Tasmanian biosecurity system that identifies and minimises the risk of a pest, disease or weed coming across Bass Strait.

Anyone who wants to bring plant tissue culture into Tasmania needs to ensure that they comply with the restrictions and entry requirements for this type of material. This fact sheet is an overview of those restrictions and what you need to do to be able to import plant tissue culture from the mainland into Tasmania.

What is plant tissue culture?

It is a method of propagating plants. It differs from traditional propagation methods in a number of ways. These include that tissue culture can often produce clones (ie exact copies) of plants that have features that are considered desirable – for example, beautiful flowers, fruit or other desirable characteristics. Tissue culture is, or should be, carried out in sterile containers and this greatly reduces the risk of transmitting pests or diseases.

Plant tissue culture is also used to produce plants that can have a relatively low germination rate from seeds – orchids being the most common example.

Why is it a biosecurity issue for Tasmania?

Where plant tissue culture is produced only in commercial laboratories, as has been the case until recently, the biosecurity risk in importing the product is very low. However, Biosecurity Tasmania is beginning to see more plant tissue cultures that are clearly not from commercial laboratories. There have even been some tissue cultures arriving at the

Tasmanian biosecurity barrier in jam jars or wrapped in clingwrap.

Also, plant tissue culture is sometimes used to regenerate plants from genetically modified plant cells. Tasmania has a ban on the importation of genetically modified material.

What are Tasmania's import requirements for plant tissue culture?

Plant tissue culture can only be imported into Tasmania in fully sealed, sterile flasks produced in commercial facilities. Flasks or jars produced by home gardeners or private individuals are not acceptable as tissue culture imports.

In addition to the above, any import of plant tissue culture must also meet Tasmania's general import requirements for plants and plant products. In short, the flask must be properly sealed, not damaged, clean and clearly labelled or branded so that the contents and the name and address of the supplier/grower and/or packer are readily identifiable.

You will also need to tell Biosecurity Tasmania about what you intend to import and when. You can do this by completing the [Notice of Intention \(NoI\)](#) form and lodging it with Biosecurity Tasmania at the port of arrival (contact details below) at least one day prior to import.

Any plant tissue culture that arrives at the Tasmanian biosecurity barrier and does not appear to have been produced in a commercial facility or without meeting the above import requirements, including the NoI, will be seized by Biosecurity Tasmania and either destroyed or returned to the mainland at the importer's expense.

What steps do I need to take to import plant tissue culture into Tasmania?

1. Complete and submit your Notice of Intention (NoI) at least one day in advance of the date when you intend to import the plant tissue culture. Keep a copy to accompany the plant tissue culture into the State. NoI forms can be downloaded from the [DPIPWE website](#).

2. All tissue culture stock intended to be imported into Tasmania must be from a commercial facility and presented to Biosecurity Tasmania for inspection on arrival.
3. Providing you take the above steps and providing the flasks are properly sealed and the general packaging requirements are satisfied, no further treatment is required to import plant tissue culture into Tasmania.

Further Information

Biosecurity Tasmania

Phone (03) 6165 3777

Fax: 03 6173 0225

Email: Quarantine.Enquiries@dpiwwe.tas.gov.au

**Biosecurity Tasmania
inspection fees may apply for all
plants and plant products being
imported into Tasmania.**

**On-the-spot fines apply for non-
compliance.**