

The International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) provides a collaborative platform that enables botanic gardens and arboreta to work together with scientific, diagnostic, regulatory and educational organisations to strengthen global plant health and plant biosecurity.

By bringing together expertise from across the horticultural, forestry, conservation and plant health sectors, the IPSN supports the early detection of emerging plant pests and pathogens, facilitates knowledge exchange, promotes best practice, and strengthens international collaboration to reduce plant health risks.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

i. Many of the alien pests and pathogens that threaten plant species, ecosystems, forestry, horticulture and agriculture worldwide are harmless within their native range. In their natural environments, these organisms are often regulated by natural enemies or by host plants that have evolved resistance. However, when introduced into new regions where these natural controls are absent, they can have severe ecological, environmental and economic consequences.

ii. Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) is the internationally recognised process used to assess the potential impact of introducing harmful organisms and to identify appropriate phytosanitary measures. While PRA remains an essential component of plant health risk assessment, it is largely based on organisms that are already known. Sentinel plants provide a valuable complementary approach by helping to identify new or unexpected pest and pathogen risks before they become widespread.

iii. The IPSN aims to strengthen global early warning systems for emerging plant pests and pathogens by:

- Connecting botanic gardens, arboreta, scientists, diagnosticians, educators and plant health authorities at local, regional and international levels;
- Strengthening capacity for plant pest and pathogen surveillance, detection, identification and awareness;
- Providing a collaborative platform for sharing knowledge, experience, information and plant health best practice;
- Supporting Pathway Risk Analysis and other plant health risk assessment activities;
- Facilitating access to scientific and diagnostic expertise;
- Encouraging reciprocal research, surveillance and capacity-building projects between member institutions;
- Supporting education, outreach and public engagement activities that promote plant health, plant biosecurity and shared responsibility for protecting plant diversity.

AGREEMENT

- i. The parties agree to become members of the International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN) and to cooperate within an international network dedicated to protecting plant health and strengthening plant biosecurity.
- ii. Membership is open to botanic gardens, arboreta and other organisations that maintain living plant collections and wish to contribute to plant health surveillance, research, education and biosecurity activities.
- iii. Members agree to contribute, where appropriate, to the monitoring and surveillance of their living collections, to report significant observations in accordance with national requirements, and to share relevant information with their National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) and the IPSN, where appropriate.
- iv. The IPSN will facilitate access to scientific and diagnostic expertise through its international network of partners and collaborating organisations, wherever possible.
- v. The IPSN will provide opportunities and platforms for members to exchange information, experience, resources and examples of good practice relating to plant health and plant biosecurity.
- vi. The IPSN will develop and make available guidance, standard protocols, training resources and other tools to support surveillance, diagnosis, education and biosecurity activities.
- vii. The IPSN will encourage and promote the active participation of its members in collaborative activities, research projects, capacity-building initiatives and information exchange across the network.

ACTIVITIES

Participation in IPSN activities is voluntary. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- i. Appointing an IPSN contact person to coordinate IPSN activities within the organisation and liaise with the IPSN Coordinator and other members of the network.
- ii. Maintaining accurate records of living plant collections and, where possible, making collection information available through BGCI PlantSearch to support reciprocal research, surveillance and risk assessment activities.
- iii. Participating in general and targeted surveillance activities, monitoring living collections for plant pests, pathogens and other biosecurity concerns, and sharing observations in accordance with IPSN guidance and national reporting procedures.
- iv. Participating in local, regional and international meetings, workshops, forums and collaborative activities that strengthen plant health knowledge, cooperation and professional networks.
- v. Promoting and making available IPSN guidance, training resources, standard protocols and educational materials to relevant staff, volunteers, students and collaborators.
- vi. Providing feedback on IPSN guidance, protocols, digital tools and training materials to support their continual improvement.
- vii. Participating in collaborative research, surveillance, citizen science, education, awareness-raising and capacity-building initiatives where appropriate.
- viii. Promoting the aims and objectives of the IPSN within the horticultural, botanical, forestry, research and conservation communities, and encouraging greater awareness of plant health and plant biosecurity among the wider public.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- i. This Agreement does not prevent or restrict members from participating in similar or complementary activities with other organisations, institutions or individuals.
- ii. Participation in IPSN activities is voluntary and subject to the resources, priorities and internal procedures of each member institution.
- iii. Any sharing of sensitive, confidential or regulated information shall be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation, institutional policies and national or international regulations.
- iv. Nothing in this Agreement creates any legally binding obligations between the parties.
- v. Membership of the IPSN does not impose any financial obligations unless otherwise agreed as part of a separate project or funding arrangement.
- vi. The IPSN will endeavour to facilitate communication, collaboration and knowledge exchange between members, partner organisations, diagnosticians and plant health authorities at local, national and international levels.
- vii. This Agreement may be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect the evolving objectives, priorities and activities of the IPSN, following consultation with its members.