

The Montana Department of Agriculture was made aware that Montana residents were receiving unsolicited packages of plant seeds in the mail from China in late July. These seed packets were not in compliance with the Montana Agricultural Seed Act, the Federal Seed Act, or phytosanitary import requirements for seed from foreign countries. Some seed shipments were traced to e-commerce transaction and have been reported in many countries across the world. Thousands of unsolicited seed packets were shipped to residents in the US and hundreds to residents of Montana. To date, USDA has identified at least 140 different types of seeds that have been shipped. In Montana, seeds for some important crops including peas, lentils, corn, and sunflowers were received from China. These seeds could transmit plant pathogens and plant viruses to important Montana crops. If you have received unsolicited seeds please do not open, plant or throw away the seed packets. Please report the seeds to the USDA: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/news-info/unsolicited-seeds/unsolicited-seeds-shipping-destinations>

The Montana Department of Agriculture encourages Montanans to help protect Montana agriculture and natural resources by only purchasing agricultural seed from licensed seed dealers <https://mtplants.mt.gov/Licenses/External/ExternalLicenseSearch.aspx>

When purchasing non-agricultural seed, seed can be purchased through local Montana nurseries and many hardware and home improvement stores. All seed sold in Montana is required to be labeled on the package including the type of seed, the germination percentage, and any presence of weed seeds. This labeling protects the purchase for any quality issues with the seed and protects Montana from the unintended introduction of Noxious Weeds. An example of the information required on a seed label can be found here: <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/Seed>