

Delawareans report receiving mysterious packages of plant seeds

DOVER, Del. (July 27, 2020) – The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) received reports over the weekend from several Delawareans who received unsolicited packages of seeds in shipments from China. After sharing information through social media, DDA found that there were more than just a few random shipments and more residents have been impacted.

Based on information provided by constituents, the packages were sent by mail and may have Chinese writing on them. All contained some sort of seed packet either alone, with jewelry, or another inexpensive item. It is believed that these shipments are part of a brushing scam where shippers send out low-cost items at their own expense in order to rank higher on e-commerce sites. Brushing helps the seller create a more legitimate appearance to their profiles.

Anyone who has received a package with seeds is asked to report the shipment to the Smuggling Interdiction and Trade Compliance Program (SITC) by calling the Smuggling Hotline at 1-800-877-3835. Recipients are asked to leave everything inside the package to help investigators trace the origin.

The seeds have not been identified but based upon the packages there are multiple plant varieties being shipped illegally. No one should ever plant seeds they did not order because they could be an invasive species. SITC will provide instructions on how to handle the seeds and in the case that they were planted, how the plants should be handled.

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